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pop and make global market moves **p52**



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MAY/JUNE 2013

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¹MRI Doublebase Gfk 2012 Cable Study, W18-49 watched Sprout in last 7 days, Children's Toys & Games – Amount Spent: For Children <12, \$500+. Indexed to total population (100).

²Beta Research Corporation, Satellite Dish Subscriber Evaluation Study and Digital Cable Subscribers Study – Evaluation of Digital Basic Networks, 2012.

Based on percent viewers very satisfied among A18+ with kids under 11.

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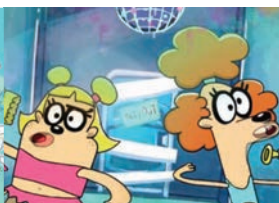
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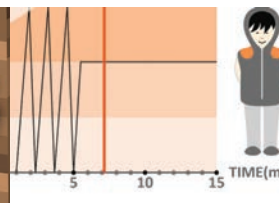
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Cover This month's cover features an ad for US net Sprout's merchandising program, represented by Big Tent Entertainment. Meanwhile, our new inside editorial cover sports an image of Bear from Moscow-based Animaccord Animation's CGI series *Masha and the Bear*.

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30TH ANNIVERSARY



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Digital—a new (old) hope

You've heard it all before. The realities of the North American licensing landscape haven't changed all that much in the last 10 years, apart from consumer-spending ups and downs. In short, most would say there are too few retailers controlling the majority of available shelf space, which is being granted to just a small group of top-selling licenses. Mirroring that situation, for kids TV-driven licenses, is the fact that a handful of broadcasters control the fate of much of the programming currently on the market. So, any way you slice it, it's a tough slog for entertainment licensors not named Disney, Marvel or Lucasfilm. Don't give up hope, however. If you can get a good concept out there, be it via YouTube or social media, kids will find it. Digital content distribution, I think, is reaching the tipping point as a force in driving indie licensing programs.



It's no secret that kids are watching and playing whenever and whatever they want, as iOS and other mobile devices proliferate. More importantly, they're engaging with content that didn't necessarily require plum placement on one of the "big three" broadcasters' schedules or top-billing at the App Store. For example, see Gary Rusak's piece on the meteoric rise of building-oriented video game *Minecraft* (p. 38). It's a hot ticket right now among licensees, and its entire burgeoning consumer products program stemmed from demands made by ardent fans, primarily kids eight to 13, for product. Creator Mojang's CEO admits that the idea for *Minecraft*'s very first license with Lego came from the game's online fan community. If the slow-moving, seemingly primitive-looking game had been pitched to licensees and retailers at its outset, I believe it would have been rejected outright. But given enough time to grow virally between 2009 and 2011, when *Minecraft* download numbers really started to take off, Mojang is now in the enviable position of turning licensees away.

Similarly, Brazilian preschool property *Galinha Pintadinha*, which now has more than 50 licensees and live stage shows in its native territory, was initially turned down by the country's kids TV broadcasters (see "Emerging markets, emerging IPs," p. 52). But its creators, undeterred, started posting animated clips on YouTube, and they quickly went viral. So far, three DVD volumes of the series *Galinha Pintadinha* have each gone on to sell more than 1.5 million copies in Brazil.

And even for indie properties with good broadcast placement, savvy digital and social media applications may give them a boost over their competitors. For example, Nerd Corps Entertainment head of global licensing Juli Boylan says the company took a risk in building an interactive department to create iOS titles based on *Slugterra* (see "Slugging it out," p. 39) in 2010 when the economy was not in great shape. But she feels it had to. "*Slugterra* is on Disney XD, which is building distribution, so we thought, 'How do we get it out in front?'" The answer was developing for iOS and the web, and maintaining a strong social media presence. Essentially, she says, it's enabled Nerd Corps to publish new *Slugterra* content on various platforms consistently, keeping it top-of-mind with fans and potential retail and licensing partners.

See you in Vegas!

Lana

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AGES 5-12



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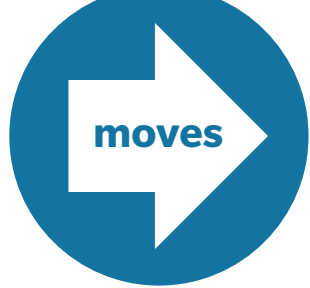
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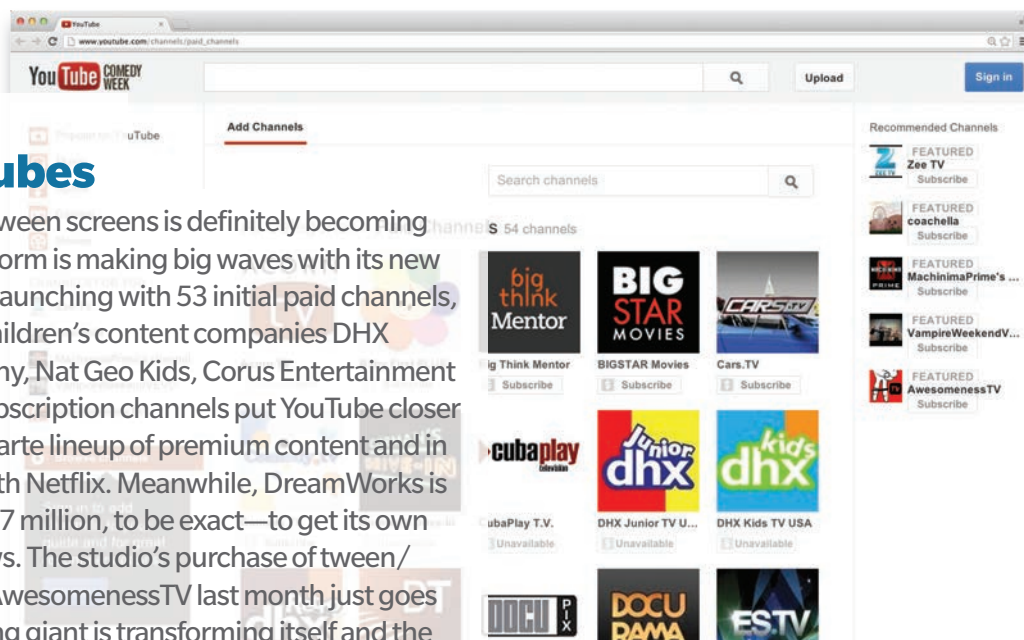


The List

Five things on our radar this month

1 Tangled up in tubes

Thanks to YouTube, the line between screens is definitely becoming blurry. The Google-owned platform is making big waves with its new paid subscription model that's launching with 53 initial paid channels, five of which are being led by children's content companies DHX Media, The Jim Henson Company, Nat Geo Kids, Corus Entertainment and BabyFirst Plus. The new subscription channels put YouTube closer to achieving an affordable à la carte lineup of premium content and in a better position to compete with Netflix. Meanwhile, DreamWorks is paying big bucks—up to US\$117 million, to be exact—to get its own piece of those online video views. The studio's purchase of tween/teen-centric YouTube channel AwesomenessTV last month just goes to show how the video streaming giant is transforming itself and the kids digital industry simultaneously.



2 Buyer beware

Not unlike its speedy response to the recall of millions of lead-laced toys in 2008, Disney has pulled the production of branded merchandise out of Bangladesh in the aftermath of April's tragic factory collapse. It's vowed to restrict product manufacturing to nations that abide by Disney's standards on working conditions. In addition, a new labor-backed Bangladesh building safety agreement has been embraced by many international retailers—just not Walmart.



3 Vine goes for Peanuts

Good Grief! Twitter's nascent micro-video platform Vine is making its move as a new marketing tool. Last month, Peanuts Worldwide commissioned stop-motion animator Khoa Phan to develop 12 Vine videos. Phan has made his name by producing more than 100 of the six-second clips and garnering more than 24,000 followers. Expect other IP owners to watch whether or not Peanuts' videos achieve that elusive viral hit status before they cling to Vine.




4 Google Glass apps arrive

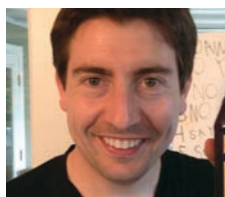
While there is still no date for the "wearable computer" to hit mass retail, Google is feeding demand by announcing a number of apps for its new futuristic product. Foremost amongst these is one for Facebook. The app will allow you to access your Facebook profile via your glasses and instantaneously take and upload pictures by simply saying, "OK Glass, take a picture." With seamless tech like that, a kid-sized version can't be far behind.



5 Is Xbox the one?

Let the debate begin. Now that Microsoft has unveiled details of its new all-in-one Xbox One home entertainment system, users will have to wait until its official global launch later this year to determine if the device's focus on social and multimedia-based features for TV, games, movies and music will be enough to ensure living room dominance over Sony's upcoming PS4, Apple TV, Roku and Nintendo's struggling WiiU.

 To keep up with the news as it happens, check out Kidscreen.com daily.



As a fifth-generation southerner who traded correspondence with the likes of Mother Teresa, Jimmy Stewart and Vincent Price as a child, meaningful personal connections have served **Jeremy Padawer** well.

Taking a love of toys to new heights

The gig Co-president and partner at Pennsylvania-based toymaker Wicked Cool Toys, focused on licensing, sales and business development. The company, which launched in October 2012 and has offices in Pennsylvania, Hong Kong and now Los Angeles, recently secured licensing deals for hit properties such as WWE, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Wiggles and Scanimalz, a new mobile-connected plush IP.

Brand ambitions Since his high school days working at a Memphis, Tennessee-based toy store, Padawer didn't necessarily know he would end up in the toy biz. However, his early attraction to merchandise and love of collecting autographs, toys, sports memorabilia and letters from famous actors and dignitaries planted the seed for what was to become a fruitful career in brand management for popular kids entertainment properties. "As a young kid, I had a real need to connect with people who had achieved major success in their life with the hope that someday I could learn something from those connections and have some level of success myself," says Padawer.

His first taste of business success came in 1996 while working on a graduate degree in law at the University of Tennessee. During this time, he created a series of websites for buying and selling collectibles online that became profitable enough to pay off his student debt. Padawer eventually wrapped his education with an MBA from Vanderbilt before Mattel snatched him up in 2001 as a brand manager for properties including Hot Wheels and He-Man. "If I didn't have that experience from an entrepreneurial level early on, Mattel may or may not have been interested in me coming in," admits Padawer.

Gaining cred From Mattel, Padawer joined Jakks Pacific and spent nearly 10 years with the California-based toyco, significantly growing its entertainment business. According to Padawer, his career-making move was driving the amazing growth of Jakks' WWE business between 2003

and 2009. "That gave me a firm identity in the toy industry," he proclaims. While proud of the accomplishment, Padawer says his best job ever was executive producing and co-creating the hit animated series *Monsuno* while at Jakks. "We went above and beyond and created our own thing. It was an insane journey," he says. With a strong foothold in the industry, Padawer faced his biggest challenge at the age of 40. "I came to the realization that it was time for me to become the entrepreneur that I was when I was 25," he says. He then made the move to Wicked Cool Toys and partnered with Michael Rinzler, a long-time friend and former Jakks colleague. "I believe Michael and I can build the next really significant toy company," he contends.

Family connections For all his achievements, Padawer says he couldn't have done it without the support of his father and older brother growing up. "They were my greatest influences because my dad told me to get an education and my brother, being a very entrepreneurial guy, helped me out early on with web development."

On leadership "A good leader is not afraid to explore, has great contacts, and a solid vision, but shouldn't be tied to any particular set of rules to achieve his or her vision." —Jeremy Dickson



Michael Rinzler (left) and Jeremy Padawer, co-presidents of Wicked Cool Toys

Out of Office

Tales from the frequent fliers club



Greg Boardman

Producer, *Rastamouse*

1. In my carry-on

You'll find power leads, USB cables, phone chargers, travel adapters, a laptop, and hopefully the next big idea!

2. My go-to gadget

Confession time—I think I'm the only person in the world to have a Playbook. It works for me, but then I'm not a big consumer of apps an' tings.

3. On the fly

I learned Italian in 1999—on a plane to Milan—to give the world premiere of a very strange composition I wrote for my PhD.

4. Preferred in-air tunes

The Rastamouse Album goes with me everywhere; crucial choons guaranteed to make you smile... oh, and a bit of Peter Gabriel.

5. Best in-flight food

Singapore Airlines, but be careful you don't overdo the chicken-and-peanut sauce if you're on the 24-hour flight to Australia.

6. Best power-lunch

I try not to eat at lunchtime but, if we have to, I'd suggest The Bathurst Pavillion, Balmoral Beach, Sydney.

7. Window or aisle?

Not usually that fussed, but you do see some fantastic things from 30,000 feet.

asian summit animation

Promoting co-production and co-financing

December 9-11, 2013

Destination? Phuket, Thailand



We are absolutely thrilled to announce that the location of this year's Asian Animation Summit is the tropical island paradise of Phuket in Thailand!

The event will be held right after Asia Television Forum again from December 9 to 11 in Karon Beach, famous for its beautiful 5km stretch of pristine white sand, big turquoise waves and spectacular sunsets.

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Home to roost

Former KOL exec Malcolm Bird returns to kids biz with new video venture

After spending four years building KOL into one of the web's top-five kids portals for parentco AOL between 2003 and 2007—the early days of web 2.0, really—former SVP and GM Malcolm Bird is back. The web is still his medium of choice, but this time round he's launching Viddiverse.com, a COPPA-compliant social video network aimed at eight to 13s that might just be the first of its kind.

The idea behind the site, which is slated to go into Beta-testing in the US this September, is to give tweens a safe and creative blend of Facebook and YouTube, where they can like and share clips and build their own profiles in the "Viddiverse." CEO Bird says Viddiverse will host a curated selection of videos from around the web, licensed professionally produced content and user-generated videos, to which kids can add special effects, sound and graphics through the site's integrated design studio tools.

While Bird acknowledges the existence of other tween-targeted social sites, he contends Viddiverse offers something different in the way it socializes online video watching in a safe, aspirational environment. "If your default is YouTube and [your tween site] is cartoony and aged-down, it will be way too patronizing," he notes. "My argument is at this age, social, content and UGC are all the same—it's just stuff they want to watch online. It's an aggregated video play for tweens online, which I haven't seen before. The only true aggregator right now is YouTube."

Bird doesn't pretend to envision Viddiverse drawing YouTube numbers, as it's so highly



Malcolm Bird

targeted, but he believes the ad-supported service will get serious parent- and kid-approval. In complying with COPPA legislation, parents sign their children up to the site, and will then receive an email link to every video their child uploads, and keep track of his or her activities. Kids, meanwhile, will have a host of content they can stockpile in their own personal online libraries. "If we don't start growing organically," Bird offers, "we'll know we're doing something wrong."

As for one of Viddiverse's chief draws, Bird is currently on the hunt for high-quality English-language content that will really hit home with tweens, particularly 11 to 13s. He's looking to set up non-exclusive revenue-share deals that will be based on preroll advertising—i.e. the more streams a video gets, the more money a producer will make. He expects the CPM rate will be considerably higher than those for generalist sites like YouTube. So, for example, if a half-hour ep averages a million streams a month on Viddiverse against a 25% share of a US\$20 pre-stream ad rate, the producer could make as much as US\$5,000 a month for that one episode. With the limited air-time and more modest acquisitions fees associated with traditional US kids TV broadcast right now, it's a viable option. Interested producers can start the conversation by dropping Bird a line via email (info@viddiverse.com). —Lana Castleman



On the circuit

Notes for the industry travel diary

July 18-21

**Comic-Con International
San Diego, California**

www.comic-con.org



The largest comic book and popular arts convention in North America makes its return for four days this July. A mecca for science fiction and fantasy, the event is considered to be just as important for fanboys as it is for Hollywood studios looking to market the blockbuster du jour. Comic-Con is packed with panels, seminars, workshops, previews, awards ceremonies, autograph sessions, and likely the most outrageous costumes to ever waltz through an exhibition hall.

July 21-25

**SIGGRAPH
Anaheim, California**

s2013.siggraph.org



SIGGRAPH2013

This year marks the 40th anniversary of the International Conference on Computer Graphics and Interactive Techniques. The educational conference and commercial exhibition are expected to attract more than 20,000 professionals from across the globe. From researchers to exhibitors, attendees of the five-day event are bound by science, art, animation, gaming, interactivity, education and the web. SIGGRAPH is sponsored by The Association for Computing Machinery.

September 17-20

**Cartoon Forum
Toulouse, France**

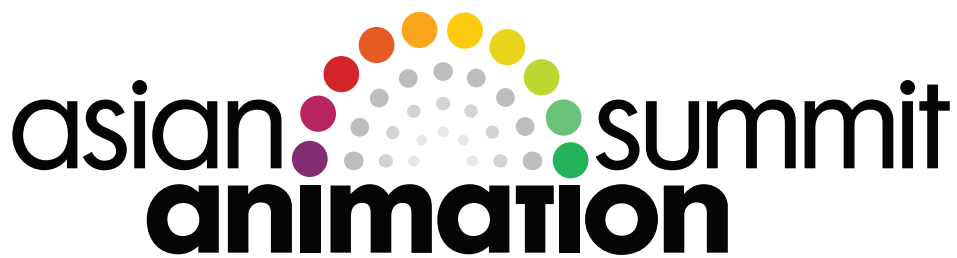
www.cartoon-media.eu



Taking place in Toulouse, France, this annual co-production forum for animated TV series is expected to draw more than 800 participants from 32 countries, as well as 250 buyers. The forum provides European producers with the opportunity to pitch animated projects to decision-makers, buyers and investors, and an estimated 70 projects will be pitched this September. Also up for viewing is the gorgeous scenery of southwestern France.



A full listing of Industry Events is available at kidscreen.com/events



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Bella Thorne shakes up the YA lit space

Already a triple-threat performer, Disney Channel's rising teen star is now an author



Dealing with daily tween/teen problems as aspiring dancer CeCe Jones on the hit original Disney Channel sitcom *Shake It Up* is familiar for 15-year-old Bella Thorne. But her latest venture as author of the upcoming teen book series *Autumn Falls*, for Random House Children's Books, is taking the Disney starlet on a much more personal journey.

Inspired by different aspects of Thorne's real life, the YA book series tells the story of a 14-year-old girl whose high school life changes after an encounter with magic.

With acclaimed author Elise Allen (*Populazzi*) on-board as co-writer, the complete series will be published by RHC's imprint Delacorte Press, with the hardcover edition of book one expected to hit shelves in summer 2014.

As a music artist, Thorne recently signed with Hollywood Records—to date, her first solo single "TTYLXOX" from the *Shake It Up* soundtrack has sold more than 400,000 copies. While recently in South Africa filming *Blended*, a new Warner Bros. movie starring Adam Sandler and Drew Barrymore, Thorne took a break to chat with *Kidscreen* about being an author, the importance of reading (she copes with dyslexia), and her influences in life.

How did the idea for a teen book series come about?

I had a story I wanted to tell. Plus I wanted to show other kids that it's possible to achieve your dreams regardless of how difficult or out of reach they may seem.

How much of the lead character is based on you?

She is loosely based on me. Our familial background is similar and so are many of our struggles. She is a regular girl in high

school with a very special ability, and we both have a guardian angel watching over us.

In today's digital world, how important are printed books for kids?

I think all that matters is that kids are reading. It doesn't matter if they are reading from a physical book or digitally on a reader or their phones, as long as they read. That is the important part.

How have you managed to cope with dyslexia?

I have learned to live with it and make the best of it. I read all the time. When I was diagnosed, I was told to read everything from street signs to cereal boxes and that my mom shouldn't read menus for me—I should read them to her! I am reading well, but it is something I work on every day.

Who are your acting and musical inspirations?

For drama, I admire Jennifer Lawrence and Natalie Portman because they both know how to handle themselves with dignity and class. I admire the fact that Natalie went to college. For comedy, it would be Adam Sandler for his quick improv skills and the smart business decisions he's made during his career. Musically, I'm inspired by Usher, Miley Cyrus and Joan Jett.

Can you tell us three things people don't know about you?

I love to bake, I am obsessed with oral hygiene (I keep dental floss in my purse) and I am obsessed with cats. I just bought a pair of shoes with cats on them. —Jeremy Dickson

Know your audience

By Jim Benton

Oh, you city kids!



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Digital gaming vet **Jack Sorensen**, who has played a hand in managing Star Wars and Pixar game franchises, is now at the helm of Saban Brands' mobile gaming division The Playforge as president. Based in San Francisco, Sorensen is responsible for overseeing the development of mainly character-based mobile games. Sorensen also leads efforts in expanding, promoting and monetizing The Playforge's digital IP, including flagship title *Zombie Farm*, through trans-media extensions within traditional media, licensing and merchandising. His appointment falls in line with Saban's strategy to further

original series and movies for Disney Channel and Disney XD, as well as casting and talent relations for those channels.

Ex-M6 head of children's programming **Morgann Favennec [B]**, who lists Disney on her resumé, has joined new Paris-based distributor Superights Family Entertainment. Founded by French companies Axone Invest and Superprod, Superights focuses solely on live-action and animated family and youth entertainment. Clément Calvet and Jérémie Fajner, the founders of Superprod, manage the new company and have hired Favennec as deputy MD in charge

have a particular eye out for animated comedies from global studios and distributors. Barnieh spent close to a decade at Nickelodeon UK, where he was involved in traditional broadcasting, as well as multiplatform initiatives.

The London and Ireland offices of Beyond Distribution, meanwhile, have welcomed **Michael Murphy** as GM. Murphy, who has been a non-executive director of Beyond Entertainment for the past eight years, will work alongside the company's acquisitions and sales teams. His previous roles have included consultant at Rockabill Media, chief

Also in Spain, leading the co-production and distribution charge at BRB Internacional is **Carlos Biern**. As CEO, Biern is now setting up global creative teams for the development and financing of animated series. His track record includes more than 20 co-productions in Europe, North America and Asia, with series such as *Iron Kid* and *Canimals*. On top of co-pros, he is also responsible for heading audiovisual, merchandising and digital/new technologies distribution for BRB. Previously, he worked for Spanish private networks Tele 5 and Antena 3.

In other cross-continental moves, Zodiak Media-owned French animation company Marathon Media has tapped American Emmy Award-winning producer **Eryk Casemiro** to serve as chief creative officer for its kids division. Casemiro manages the creative aspects of all kids productions and leads a team of executive producers. He also oversees development and production opportunities for new content for children and families across all media platforms. Casemiro's development experience as a studio executive, writer, creator and producer spans more than 450 half hours of television and four motion

people



itself within the mobile space, as the company expects to deliver more games, IP and collaborations this year. He brings with him more than 20 years of gaming experience, including a stint as EVP of worldwide studios at THQ.

Approaching two decades worth of experience at Disney, development exec **Adam Bonnett [A]**, who has spearheaded such shows as *Hannah Montana* and *Shake it Up*, has been upped to the newly created role of EVP of original programming at Disney Channels Worldwide. Bonnett has led Disney's programming development team that has churned out a host of original series. In his new role, he will continue to oversee all live-action development and current

of sales and acquisitions. Favennec was previously head of children's programs at M6 Group. Superights has already acquired the international distribution rights for preschool animated series *Pic Nic with Cake* and *Kika & Bob*, and is working on finalizing deals for other series.

Meanwhile, Turner International looks to grow its acquisition efforts with the help of former Nickelodeon exec **Edward Barnieh [C]**, who's been named programming and acquisitions manager for the Asia Pacific region. Based in Hong Kong, Barnieh is responsible for Turner's acquisition strategies for its kids networks, including Cartoon Network, Cartoonito, Pogo, Toonami and Boomerang. He will

executive at Windmill Lane Entertainment and founder of Channel 6 Ireland.

Over in Barcelona, production company Imira Entertainment has named **Elena Mera Dios** as its new sales manager for the EMEA, North America and Asian markets. Her move is timed with the departure of producer and head of sales **Christophe Goldberger**. Dios is charged with solidifying and furthering relationships within these territories. She has held previous positions at Treeline Distribution in international sales and marketing, as well as at Plural Entertainment and Spanish broadcaster Antena 3. Goldberger, meanwhile, has left the company after eight years to explore other opportunities within the industry.

From Europe to Australia, **Raphaela Faetkenheuer** has made the move from Studio 100 Media's German offices to Sydney-based animation studio Flying Bark Productions. Faetkenheuer was formerly a marketing and brand manager at Studio 100, which purchased Flying Bark in 2008, and the companies have since collaborated on *Vicky the Viking*, among other series. As marketing manager at Flying Bark, she's now responsible for the company's marketing, public relations, brand development, distribution and related projects both within Australia and abroad. Her move is timed with Flying Bark's enhanced focus on marketing, licensing and merchandising of its key IPs.

pictures, including the Rugrats movie franchise. His arrival in Paris is timed with Marathon's expanding activities in L.A.

And in toy land, former Jakks Pacific head of international licensing **Carl England [D]** has assumed the role of MD at Platinum Films, home of the boy-skewing *Matt Hatter Chronicles*. England will lead the global licensing and merchandising rollout of Matt Hatter, which will undergo a cross-platform product launch next year. England is also charged with growing existing Platinum IP, such as Dream Street and Planet Cook. The licensing vet previously held senior licensing roles at Disney, Timberland and Canterbury.

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A rabid fan base has helped propel NHK's mascot Domo to superstar status with a multi-million dollar global licensing program and an upcoming TV series

More than mascots

From Domo to Doki, broadcaster mascots are evolving well beyond channel idents and interstitials, into long-form series and global licensing stars

BY JEREMY DICKSON

When Michigan J. Frog made his TV debut in the 1955 Looney Tunes cartoon *One Froggy Evening*, could he ever have imagined he would become the mascot of The WB network 40 years later, hold the role for 10 years, and see his likeness adorning t-shirts and coffee mugs? Sadly, we'll never know, because the top-hat-wearing amphibian was retired in 2005 after the net claimed he skewed too young for its YA target.

There is no denying Michigan experienced a successful rebirth, but there are no guarantees for mascots, whether they are born from existing series or an original idea. All the pre-testing and strategizing in the world can't predict whether or not they'll resonate with kids and parents immediately, over time, or at all.

For example, who knew Domo, first seen in stop-motion interstitials, celebrating the 10th anniversary of Japan-based NHK's satellite broadcasting in 1998, would go on to become one of the internet's first memes and a global pop culture icon? Even Discovery Kids Latin America, which purposely created its explorer boy/dog character Doki to be the face of the channel in 2005, failed to envision how successful he would become.

Fortunately for Domo and Doki, their IP owners and partners have been quick to take advantage of the right opportunities in today's more socially connected, content-driven world. They've managed to expand the characters' environments and storylines authentically across TV and gaming, grow consumer product programs and perhaps ensure their longevity.

Brand connection

When Discovery Kids Latin America hired Argentinean design studio Steinbranding to help the 24-hour pre-school channel create a character that would represent curiosity, real-life experiences, exploration, playfulness

and learning—key values of the Discovery Kids brand—a new mascot was born.

Doki first lived on the channel within interstitials and daily navigational elements, teaching kids how to be confident and optimistic. He immediately clicked with the channel's audience and his popularity took off.

"For kids to relate to a brand and feel a connection, mascots go a long way further than idents that are abstract logos or letter designs. They don't make you feel the same way as you would toward a loveable character you can empathize with," says Angela Sondon, Discovery Kids VP and director.

Enhanced worlds

Shortly after Doki's on-air debut, Discovery Kids launched live promotional events in its main Latin American markets for kids and parents to experience the channel's brand, meet characters, and participate in activities and games.

Then as early as 2007, the channel laid the groundwork for a future long-form series by creating friends for Doki to interact with during interstitials, live events and in new stage productions.

"We introduced the character Mundi because, by then, we felt like Doki had been talking to himself for way too long," says Sondon.

After Mundi, four more characters (Oto, Fico, Anabella and Gabi) joined the pack, a pilot aired at the end of

2009, and a long-form series got the greenlight in 2011. The network then turned to Toronto, Canada's Portfolio Entertainment to produce and distribute the new 26 x half-hour *Doki* series, which debuted in Lat Am on April 15. Eight of the 26 x 11-minute episodes are now completed, with the remainder expected by December.

For Discovery Kids supervising producer Adriano Schmid, the challenge of producing *Doki* was ensuring the show would work for a global audience. "We want him to represent kids all over the world, so we made him function as a kid, which is why viewers don't necessarily see him as a dog," he says.

So far, the universal approach has helped DK secure a broadcasting deal with Israel's Hop!, and more international deals are expected, as well as new apps and expanded live events based on the series.

To date, Doki's consumer products program includes more than 50 licensees in categories such as toys, games, plush, apps, apparel, music DVDs and CDs, publishing and stationery.

The sharing factor

While DK works towards a second season of *Doki* and international growth, Domo's career as NHK's mascot continues its phenomenal arc, thanks to ongoing global fan engagement from the user-generated content generation.


Since launching in Japan, the mascot has spawned thousands of fan sites, YouTube videos, a Facebook game, mobile apps, and popular Twitter and Instagram accounts.

On the consumer products side, the IP has generated roughly US\$50 million in worldwide retail sales (excluding Asia), according to Rich Maryyanek, partner and CMO at New York-based licensing agency Big Tent Entertainment, which has repped the Tsuneo Goda-created brand outside of Asia since 2007.

As a measure of the character's growing popularity in the US, Maryyanek says a Domo toaster that launched last year was "the number-two top-selling toaster in December 2012 on Amazon.com behind a Proctor Silex toaster that any household in the world might have."

With his stamp firmly on the merchandising industry for teens and young adults, Domo is now following Doki's lead by heading into longer-form TV series production.

"We are pretty far along in discussions with NHK on a new TV series," says Maryyanek, who was not able to confirm how the mostly non-verbal character would be portrayed on TV. "We expect to debut and begin pitching the series at MIPCOM this October."

He adds that Domo has resonated with fans because he's a very malleable character. "Because he wasn't initially tied to a TV show specifically, Domo can go into different activities and assume different roles." This summer, he'll have his own Domo-branded stage on the North American Vans Warped Tour and will be featured in a new jewelry line by acclaimed New York-based designer Udi Behr. 



Discovery Kids Lat Am mascot Doki's heading from interstitials to a TV series produced by Portfolio Entertainment



Toonami taps fan creativity

When Turner Broadcasting System Asia Pacific launched its new boy-skewing action/anime channel Toonami on December 1, 2012, it unveiled an innovative online competition asking fans to submit creative ideas that would expand the origins of the channel and complete the back story of NAMI, an artificial life-form sent from the future.

The winning submission, recently selected from more than 1,000 entries, will be turned into an animated short and a limited-edition comic book produced in-house by Turner's Asia Pacific team.

"We're currently speaking with animation studios, and we have some excellent storyboards that are ready to go into production," says Lucien Harrington, Turner International Asia Pacific's VP of branding and communications.

A launch is expected this month for the first short, and there could be up to three produced in total. "Once that is confirmed, we'll officially announce the winner and be in a position to present the comic and find opportunities to involve the winner in the future development of the NAMI story."

Harrington adds that Turner will treat the NAMI animated shorts and comic just as it would original programming, but will need time to determine if NAMI will become a full-fledged channel mascot.

In the meantime, a 3D-rigged NAMI model is being created for the character to potentially introduce shows, stunts and, if possible, game reviews.

Adventure Time™



AWESOME SHOWS



Local live-action puppet series *Anbar Show* is a leading new JeemTV title

JCC evolves its brand

An Al Jazeera Children's Channel reorg unleashes JeemTV, a new multiplatform media brand designed to appeal to modern Arab kids

The challenge Realizing a need to better meet the multiplatform requirements of modern Arab kids around the world, JCC relaunched on March 29 as a newly restructured pan-Arab media organization with four separate, but interrelated media entities. There's brand-new lifestyle entertainment media platform JeemTV for the seven to 12 bracket (including www.jeemtv.net, which features on-the-go live streaming and games), preschool channel Baraem.TV, VOD educational portal Taalam.tv, and cultural initiative Siwar, JCC's children's choir for kids ages nine to 16.

Understanding kids "As a continuation of Qatar Foundation's mission, we are evolving the brand and continuing to uphold excellence by unlocking children's potential," says Saad Al Hudaifi, JCC's deputy executive GM and acting director of channels. "Over the years, JCC has gained substantial experience by producing its own content and carefully selecting the rest from the best of the international market. At the same time, we have built a knowledge base through research, providing tremendous insight into Arab children's tastes and behavior, ultimately ensuring JCC delivers a balance of what they want and need."

The dayparts JeemTV's main programming blocks cater to kids during peak hours and offer family programming in the evenings. According to Al Hudaifi, JCC research has shown that the peak viewing hours for the majority of its audience are between 5 p.m. and 8 p.m. Mecca time. The next most desired timeslot is primetime between 7 p.m. and 10 p.m., and the third best-viewed block is the early morning slot before school. During the week, JeemTV's daily sked begins at 6 a.m. and is divided into six key areas—Get up and Go, Grow and Learn, Readjust, Engage, Entertainment and Family Time. The weekends kick off at 9 a.m. and consist of five blocks—Get up and Go,

Reflect and Inspire, Connection, Prime Time and Family Time.

Preschool net Baraem.TV, which launched in 2009, targets the daily routines of mothers and their preschool-

ers, and begins with upbeat programming celebrating the sunrise, shifting to higher energy shows mid-morning, followed by educational content that introduces kids to Arabic letters, numbers, colors and shapes in the early afternoon. A wind-down bedtime block featuring slower-paced shows caps off the day.

The programming According to JCC's research on viewing habits in the MENA region, TV watching is the most common family activity in Arab households—76% of seven to 12s watch TV for entertainment, while 42% watch to learn. Meanwhile, 80% of Arab mothers believe TV benefits their preschoolers' learning, and 49% of children watch TV content online. Accordingly, JCC's programming spans a variety of formats and genres, including live action, animation, comedies, game/quiz shows, magazine/talk shows, educational reality shows, reality adventure series, documentaries, puppetry and storytelling series. Newly launched in-house productions include live-action puppet series *Anbar Show*, tech-inspired magazine series *Shasha Tech* and girl-skewing *Noun*. As for new third-party acquisitions, Jeem TV has snapped up a bunch of programming that includes BBC's *Andy's Wild Adventures* and Disney's *The Emperor's New School*, animated action-adventure series *Kim Possible* and sitcom *Zeke and Luther*.

Next moves As JCC builds on its new structure, it plans to continue to commission, co-produce and acquire international titles and is on the lookout for animation, live-action and family-themed content including movies, documentaries and dramas. "We will be reviewing content that is global and current, and that teaches, inspires and empowers youth while being relevant and responsible in an Arab home environment," says Al Hudaifi. JCC also aims to grow its merchandising business and responsibly commercialize its social sites and 360-degree digital destinations. —Jeremy Dickson

The Amazing World Of Gumball™



Irish 4 to 14s flock to RTE

With a newly launched preschool channel and top-ranked market shares, Ireland's national pubcaster is amping up its commitment to kids entertainment



Peppa Pig, airing on Nick Jr., was the top-ranked show with Ireland's four to six demo in March

For December 2012, Ireland's RTE2, which airs most of the top-performing children's programs in the country across its daily sked, gathered an average audience of 7,200 children in the four to 14 demo and held a market share of 8.2%.

However, the country's high percentage of homes with satellite (63%) and digital TV (97%) means kids are accessing content on dedicated pay-TV channels such as Nickelodeon, Disney Channel and Cartoon Network. (The Nickelodeon bouquet, however, remains the only measured group of specialty children's channels in the country.)

Despite the cancellation of BBC's two free-to-air children's blocks last December due to low ratings, the country's TV market for kids is undergoing changes that, according to Eurodata TV research manager Johanna Karsenty, may boost competition.

On April 15, RTE debuted RTEjr, its own dedicated free-to-air preschool channel. And generalist channel TV3, which currently offers no children's programming, has plans in the works to launch its own dedicated channel, 3Kids. Karsenty says it remains to be seen how the launch of RTEjr will affect RTE2's lineup. "RTE2 may become more exclusive to older kids shows, with RTEjr focusing on the seven and under set."

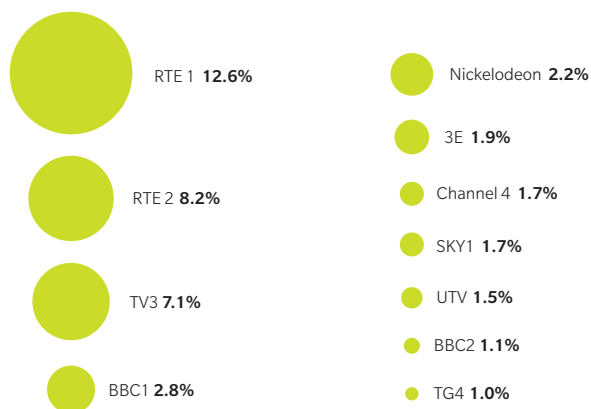
For specialty channels, Nick's December 2012 share of kids four to 14 sat at 2.2%, with NickToons and Nick Jr. slightly behind at 1.3% and 1.2%, respectively. The top three highest-ranked shows among children ages four to six in March were: *Peppa Pig*, which scored a 24.2% share (approximately 17,900 kids) on Nick Jr. with its best-performing episode; RTE2's *13 Ghosts of Scooby-Doo* and *Ben 10 Ultimate Alien* on Irish-language channel TG4.

Beating Nickelodeon in market share among children four to 14 is RTE2. Kid viewers have helped turn its after-school block into the best-performing part of its sked, with *The Simpsons* at number one (35,300 kids/19.9% share for March 2013, ranked by best-performing episode), followed by *Victorious* (26,600/16.9%) and *Lab Rats* (26,000/18.5%). Additional international live-action series including *The Suite Life on Deck*, *iCarly* and *House of Anubis* populate the top 10 list. And cartoons such as *Scooby-Doo*, *Sylvester and Tweety* and *Penguins of Madagascar* also place in the upper ranks of the ratings.

Though children's programming dominates, kids in Ireland are also watching soap operas. Shows such as *Coronation Street*, *Eastenders* and RTE1's local Irish production *Fair City* are among the most popular.

—Jeremy Dickson

Market share Children 4 to 14



Eurodata TV Worldwide is a French company specializing in TV audience ratings research and market intelligence that offers TV data as well as expertise and insight into the performance of TV shows in more than 90 countries. Ratings information is provided directly by research institutes in each country, which, like Eurodata's parent company Médiamétrie, measure daily television audience ratings. For more information, contact sales manager Jacques Balducci (jbalducci@eurodatatv.com, 33-1-4758-9434).

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JustLaunched Alfie Atkins

Maipo Film brings an iconic Nordic preschool property back to TV and zeroes in on worldwide sales

An auteur series As only the first 16 books were given a TV treatment originally, Maipo was tasked with adapting the remaining nine books, which meant it required four new stories to reach 13 episodes. “We weren’t interested in acquiring the rights to ghostwrite *Alfie*, so in order to have 13 episodes we asked Gunilla to write four new stories, which she did,” explains Maipo producer Kristin Ulseth. Despite the challenge of attracting partners to a small 13-episode series with a US\$2.6-million budget, Maipo persevered through a three-year financing period and eventually secured its team. After the first episodes drew a 67% average rating for children ages two to 11 in Norway, Maipo released the English version of the complete series in March. It also saw some of the series’ day ratings increase up to 85% over the Easter period when NRK aired the second batch of eps. *Alfie Atkins* has now been sold to nine European broadcasters including NRK (Norway), SVT (Sweden), DR (Denmark), WDR (Germany), YLE (Finland), RUV (Iceland), ERR (Estonia), RTV (Slovenia) and DUNA (Hungary).

Staying true Honoring the feel of the original series, Ulseth notes that the production includes voiceovers and uses the same composer, but it revised *Alfie Atkins* with a faster pace and a more thematic approach to its stories. The new series, which follows the everyday adventures of Alfie, explores the same elements of humor, imagination, philosophy, perspective, and understanding found in the books. The character even uses his imagination to understand more complex concepts like war. “The strength of the series is that it’s about a real boy who represents real children,” says Ulseth. “It’s not stuck in a specific environment or culture.”

Next moves With marketing support provided by its broadcast partners, and sales handled by TrustNordisk, Maipo and co-producers A.Film Production, Eyeworks and SVT are currently wrapping production on the brand’s first movie—a 75-minute 2D feature entitled *Hocus Pocus Alfie Atkins* (pictured). A Scandinavian premiere is currently set for Sweden this August, with an international launch timed for 2014 in Berlin. “For us, it’s more important to campaign around the feature film, so once it’s out, we can put more focus on all the projects together,” says Ulseth. “The main sales drive will occur at MIP Jr. in the fall.” Other brand extensions include a web game for broadcasters, a mobile app by Hyper Games expected in August, and a number of consumer products from licensees including Teddykompaniet (soft toys), Cappelen (book, presents, stationery) and Kärnan Egmont (activity books, toys). —Jeremy Dickson

To say Norway-based prodco Maipo Film felt a certain amount of responsibility when it was given the greenlight for a brand-new animated series based on one of the most popular Nordic characters of all time is an understatement. With a rich history dating back to 1972 when Swedish author Gunilla Bergström penned the first *Alfie Atkins* book starring an ingenious six-year-old boy, the IP lived on as a 16 x 10-minute animated series from Swedish broadcaster SVT. Bergström went on to write 25 *Alfie* books that have been translated into 30 languages, selling upwards of eight million copies globally. Maipo and Denmark’s A.Film Production, along with co-producers NRK, SVT, DR, WDR and China’s Hong Guang Animation, debuted the first seven episodes of the new 13 x 13-minute 2D-animated *Alfie Atkins* last December on NRK and are now shopping it to the rest of the world.

On-air





Yu-Gi-Oh!

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Pipeline

An early peek at shows on the development track

family



Co-producers: I Love Television (UK), Be-Film (Belgium), Moi j'aime la television (France)

Style: CGI/live-action

Format: 26 x half hours

Budget: US\$386,436 per episode

Delivery: Fall 2014

Status: ILTV is in advanced talks with a number of international broadcasters and distributors, and the series is in pre-production/scripting/casting with full production set to begin in early 2014. Lead producer ILTV UK is overseeing financing while ILTV France is handling animation production in Paris.

My Bleeping Life Head writer Grant Cathro and producer Phil Ox, the creative team behind ILTV's *Genie in the House*, are working on a new sitcom that provides a fresh spin on the suburban fantasy genre. Tapping the spirit of renowned American animator Tex Avery and popular series such as *The Jetsons* and *Bewitched*, *My Bleeping Life* follows the slapstick adventures of titular character Bleep, a robot built by a super-advanced alien civilization who is accidentally delivered to Charlotte Martin, a 14-year-old Earth girl. While the two quickly develop a friendship, life in the Martin household is disrupted as Charlotte's new gaffe-prone pal inadvertently creates mayhem with his eagerness to serve as a multi-tasking home helper.

preschool



Airside Andy Using a STEM curriculum and marking Greg Lynn's first preschool project since departing from Chapman Entertainment, *Airside Andy* stars a team of ground-based airport vehicles and their enthusiastic leader Andy, who is living his dream of working at a bustling airport. Co-created by Robert Cooper with Peter Le Masurier, and designed to teach preschoolers about friendship and teamwork, the action-comedy series will be approximately 85% stop-frame animation produced by Adrenalynn, and 15% CGI delivered by Technicolor in Bangalore, India. The IP will debut on digital platforms this summer via a 2D gaming app, an eBook and website. Plans are also in the works to launch the app at Servisair's Aspire-branded airport lounges across the UK this fall, preloaded onto tablets installed at the sites.

Co-producers: Adrenalynn Entertainment (UK), Technicolor Digital Productions (Paris, France)

Style: Stop frame/CGI animation

Format: 52 x 10 minutes

Budget: US\$6.8 million

Delivery: Late 2014/early 2015

Status: In advanced development

NowTrending—Media

What's bubbling up in kid content culture



Disney Junior's *Jake and the Never Land Pirates* is headed to Netflix

Disney's cross-platform dominance

Disney's command of the core kids demos in the TV ratings game surpassed another milestone for the week of May 13. Disney Channel US just happened to celebrate its 101st consecutive week as the top-rated network for kids six to 11 and nine to 14, according to Nielsen numbers. It also bested rival Nickelodeon that same week by at least double digits for the 80th consecutive week in the kids six to 11 demo and the 82nd straight week in the tweens category. Across platforms, viewers can expect the momentum to continue, thanks to Disney's recent deal with Netflix, which sees the SVOD heavyweight scoop up the US rights to a total of five Disney Junior and Disney XD shows including *Jake and the Never Land Pirates*. With big things expected from upcoming series such as season two of Disney Interactive's *Swampy's Underground Adventures* and *Star Wars Rebels* from Disney-owned Lucasfilm Animation, a few more milestones may be on the horizon for the media giant.

Kabillion extends its reach

On-demand kids entertainment network Kabillion is tapping into the ongoing trend of providing more content. It recently partnered with Saban Brands to launch a new Vortexx-branded VOD channel and is also joining forces with Maker Studios, an indie network on YouTube that has more than 10,000 channels and 165 million content subscribers. Kabillion's new Vortexx channel, which will co-exist with the existing boy-skewing Vortexx TV block and online hub, will see *Power Rangers Lost Galaxy* and *Sonic X* both debut this month, followed by *Dragon Ball Z Kai* in July. On YouTube, Kabillion programming debuted on Maker's US Cartoonium channel in April, while it also took the opportunity to beef up its own presence at YouTube.com/Kabillion. Considering Kabillion will receive additional development, production, promotion, distribution, sales and marketing service support from Maker, it may see its roughly six million monthly on-demand views and reach of 40 million US households expand significantly.



Shorts Program 2012 finalist *Pam and Sid's Port-a-Party* is now in series development

Tooning up

Nick retools animation approach with thriving reborn shorts program

With its Animated Shorts Program attracting 900 pitches this year—an increase of 300 from last year's inaugural reborn program—Nickelodeon is proving good things come in small formats.

"The shorts program is about being experimental again, testing new models and finding innovative creators of comedy-driven kids content," says Nick's SVP of animation development, Jenna Boyd. "As it's turned out, we've discovered some incredible creators, directors, comedians and artists."

Four of the 12 original concepts chosen as finalists this year could potentially be turned into one-minute comedy shorts for Nickelodeon, the new *Nick App* and Nick.com. On deck are: *Bug Salad* from *Sanjay and Craig* director Carl Faruolo; *Earmouse and Bottle* conceived by storyboard artist Brian Morante; *Welcome to Woodstump* created by artist Zach Smith; and Jack Cusumano's *Broats*.

Looking at the progress of last year's finalists, six of the 12 chosen shorts are currently in series development (including *Pam and Sid's Port-a-Party* from Groundling alums Mindy Sterling and Annie Sertich) and two are set for pilot orders. Most of the shorts are available on Nick.com and all of them will head to the *Nick App*, which is growing in popularity, attracting more than one million users since launching in February.

"Because we have the *Nick App*, we finally have a distribution platform for original shorts that allows for immediate audience feedback," says Boyd.

"The shorts program, which is open to all styles [2D, digital 2D, CGI, stop motion, mixed media], also challenges the way we look at our pilot process. Now that we have a great distribution model with the app, we can pilot with the short in our traditional development, too."

Boyd notes that when a short expresses a simple idea in style, tone and voice with clear, strong character dynamics, it's a solid jumping-off point for series development. "Platforms like YouTube have shown that kids digest comedy in shorter forms," she adds. "It doesn't mean they don't enjoy an 11- or 22-minute cartoon, but a two- to four-minute short can translate into an 11-minute toon very well if it has the core character and relationship attributes you can build on."

And as the shorts program is proving to have worldwide appeal, Nick is planning an international launch in the coming months. Nina Hahn, Nickelodeon's London-based SVP of international production and development, extended the 2013 submission deadline until Annecy (which takes place later this month in France) to take international pitches. —Jeremy Dickson



BY GARY RUSAK

Getting experiential

As online retail sales grow, bricks-and-mortar outlets are busy stripping away their look-but-don't-touch reputations to compete—especially when it comes to kids products. From nine-foot-tall robot greeters to dedicated interactive spaces, traditional retailers and their licensing partners are stepping up the in-store experience.

Online retail continues to mature, representing a bigger piece of the overall retail pie than it ever has. In fact, according to Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Forrester Research, US e-commerce and online retail sales sat at roughly US\$226 billion in 2012, jumping up 12% from 2011 figures. This change in consumer behavior is reverberating across the retail landscape, particularly when it comes to in-store shopping. Innovating experiential retail is becoming a priority for retailers across the globe. Both bricks-and-mortar retailers and their brand partners are feeling the pressure to enhance, elevate and transform the shopping experience to lure customers away from the convenience and price transparency that now defines online retail.

UK retailer John Lewis recently revamped the kids section at its Oxford Street location in central London to accommodate more immersive retail experiences

Growing up

"The movement towards experiential retail is happening across the board," says Vanessa Hartnoll, independent retail expert and former global head of shopper insights for research firm Hall & Partners. "Especially in the kids space, we are finding more immersive and experiential retail. A lot of money is being spent on obliterating the 'look but don't touch' rule."

Hartnoll contends that all aspects of children's retail are "growing up" by changing the focus of their efforts from selling products to parents to catering to children as consumers in their own right. "They are treating the kids like mini-adults now," she says. "The kids are much more digitally savvy, and retailers are starting to realize the influence they are having on purchases. At the same time, adult retail is becoming more playful and interactive, so we are seeing a convergence of the two."

Carol Spieckerman, president of Bentonville, Arkansas-based retail consultancy newmarketbuilders, agrees that big-box retail is going through a transformation necessitated by the growing strength of the online sector. "Online environments have become a lot more stimulating and engaging than in-store," she says. "Now retailers are trying to bring that same level of brand engagement and stickiness that used to describe the online environment into their stores."

The shift is also slowly changing the physical appearance of retail locations, from big box to specialty, and the makeover is becoming readily apparent to anyone walking the aisles. "After years of cleaning up clutter and making everything generic and tidy, now physical retail is in the early stages of becoming highly experiential at the store level," says Spieckerman. "They see a mandate to make their physical spaces work for them."

She adds that while big-box retailers have lost their competitive edge in terms of price and selection, they are doubling their efforts to capitalize on their one clear advantage—physical space. "It's the only advantage they have over a place like Amazon. They have the opportunity to bring highly engaging experiential concepts into the actual store."

The land of robot greeters

A Stateside example of successful experiential retail cited by Hartnoll can be found in Salt Lake City, Utah's The Grand America Hotel. Its retail space, called Joujou, occupies part of the overall hotel and spa complex and carries approximately 1,700 SKUs, focused primarily on non-licensed specialty and educational kids items that change on a monthly basis.

"Inspiration [for the space] came from years of traveling and a love and passion for toys," says Brent Watts, creative director at Struck, the agency that designed the space. "I love the magical world and wanted people to be curious—imagination is the key."

Joujou opened in November 2011 and has since garnered much attention for its unique approach to retailing.



A monster display wall manned by animatronic robots greets customers entering the Joujou store housed in Salt Lake City, Utah's The Grand America Hotel

Retail manager for The Grand America Hotel, LaChell Talley, says the tone is set when a customer first walks into the space and is greeted by a "monster display wall" populated by robots.

"The figures, have names like Buzz and Paco and infrared sensors that trigger movements," she explains. "They each have a personality. For example, Buzz runs away if he sees someone."

One of the "robot greeters" weighs 175 pounds and stands nine feet tall. "It also has a trigger," says Talley. "When someone walks by, it says a funny phrase or tells a joke. It's fun for people—that is the point."

The robots are just the first of many different interactive and immersive experiences that dot the store's 1,300 square feet. The space also houses a candy organ that recalls the design of a Pez dispenser and a floor keyboard reminiscent of the attraction in FAO Schwarz's flagship store in New York, made famous by the film *Big*. "We always have children and adults dancing on it," adds Talley.

As part of a private corporation, The Grand America Hotel complex doesn't disclose sales, but Talley says Joujou has become an attraction in and of itself and draws customers from beyond the hotel complex. According to Hartnoll, it's become a notable toy retailer in the area.

"We are finding that the design and interactivity has improved our sales because our customers are having such a great time," says Talley, adding that the interactive elements do not get in the way of POS activities. "Our customers want to take something home with them so they can remember what a great experience they have had here."

John Lewis innovates

In the UK, the growth of innovative and experiential retail is no less noticeable. "John Lewis has recently revamped its children's area," says Hartnoll. "It's worth checking out."

She's referring specifically to the fourth floor of the John Lewis store located on Oxford Street in central London. With a recent 2,000-square-foot expansion, the retailer, which

has 43 UK locations that generated US\$13 billion in sales in 2012, has taken a proactive approach to immersive retail. “We are trying to bring some theater and fun into what can be a mundane experience,” says Amanda Montague-Sweetland, operations manager at John Lewis Oxford Street.

While the fourth floor has an area dedicated to electronic interaction, showcasing the latest tablets and apps to give John Lewis’s online store a physical presence (including the ability to have any item ordered online delivered to the bricks-and-mortar location by 2 p.m. the next day), the retailer’s approach towards interactivity takes a more human turn.

“We have concentrated on building a trust with our customer,” says Montague-Sweetland. “We have started to host more book signings, and we have costume characters walking around and in-person demonstrations, too.”

For example, the store has put an emphasis on arts and crafts demonstrations as a simple but effective way to build a relationship with a consumer. “Consumers are bombarded by so much messaging all the time,” she says. “When something is actually demonstrated in front of them, it has the ability to cut through all the noise.”

The demonstrations and events are refreshed often, and brand partners like Lego and Nintendo work in cooperation to develop new demonstrations and hands-on attractions. “We create hot-spots,” says Montague-Sweetland. “If there is a new range of products, then we can showcase it for a limited amount of time.”

To that end, John Lewis has also endeavored to create a different sort of relationship with parents than most traditional retailers. When a customer enters the fourth floor, there is a section dedicated to parents-to-be. There, experts on staff are available to answer a wide array of questions on a complimentary basis that new parents might have, which are not limited to specific product offerings.

“It’s just a way to point people to the right place,” says Montague-Sweetland. “We answer questions about what a new parent needs during those first few days and weeks. It’s not about the hard sell—it’s about giving us the opportunity to start a great conversation with our customers that we hope will continue.”

Are brands experienced?


Of course, the future of physical retail is not only a concern for retailers but also for brands entering the new era. “There is now an opportunity for brands to engage with kids directly,” says Spieckerman. “In the past it used to be that having a brand be ‘exclusive’ was enviable. Now, having a brand in different places, across multiple touch points, is valuable and exclusivity is really a ticket to obscurity.”

Providence, Rhode Island-based toyco Hasbro is a prime example of a brand owner in the kids space meeting the challenge of these new retail expectations. “Creating broad experiences for our customers to interact with our products has been a high priority for us,” says Simon Waters, SVP of global brand licensing and publishing at Hasbro. “We have found that we have to put a little theater, a little drama, into stores now.”

A good example is the Nerf Arena that Hasbro licensee Paragon opened this year in a shopping mall complex just outside Birmingham, England. “It’s a space where families can get together and use Nerf Blasters,” says Waters, describing the activity center.

Currently, there are no POS capabilities at the Nerf Arena, but Waters says that a full assortment of Nerf blasters, apparel and other products will soon be made available for purchase. It’s a concept that he believes will have global traction. “We intend to build on that idea around the world,” he says. “One of our mottos is that we bring play to life, and we can literally do that with this idea.”

Other brands under the Hasbro umbrella have taken a similar tact, including My Little Pony-themed art gallery shows that accompanied dedicated pop-up shops in New York and L.A. last year.

“Retail has traditionally been static,” notes Waters. “As it gets more sophisticated, we have to figure out better ways for consumers to interact with a brand. The consumer’s expectation is a lot higher now.” 

Hasbro’s Nerf Arena outside Birmingham, England lets kids get hands-on experience with their (foam) weapon of choice



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A hot item at this year's Hong Kong Toy Fair, The Bridge Direct's Pinkie Cooper mixes cute canines and fashion to appeal to girls

Girl power

Thanks to the blockbuster success of a little IP called **Monster High**, catering to girls has become a top priority for retailers, licensees and licensors—and there's a whole new crop of properties set to pop at Licensing Show to fill the gap

Ideally, the loop between retailers, licensors and licensees should keep store shelves perfectly stocked to meet consumer demands, keeping cash registers humming and a lot of black ink marking corporate bottom lines. However, the ebbs and flows of the trend-driven licensing biz rarely make for ideal conditions. So when a surprise blockbuster success emerges, it only makes sense that others try to follow in its wake, and that's happening with girl-skewing IP right now. After years of over-serving boys, it seems that the pendulum has taken a decidedly feminine swing, and Licensing Show promises to be replete with properties designed to appeal to girls.

Monster success

In 2010, toyco Mattel introduced its internally hatched Monster High IP. The aged-down, high-concept Goth-meets-Twilight-meets-fashion doll might have been viewed as a risky move, but the results speak for themselves.

"With more than 200 licensees across almost 30 countries and more than 45 categories, it's a multi-category global franchise," says Diane Reichenberger, VP of consumer products at Mattel. "Monster High has become a billion-dollar brand at retail in less than three years."

According to Port Washington, New York-based research firm NPD, Monster High fashion dolls hold the number-one slot in category sales in Spain and are number two

in the US, Germany, France, UK, Mexico, Canada and Italy. Additionally, with expert marketing executions including well-placed online animated content and a highly visible retail promotion in more than 1,200 US Kmart stores, sales generated by Monster High's licensing program grew 290% worldwide and 190% in the US between 2011 and 2012.

"With Monster High, [Mattel] found a good opening," says Nancy Fowler, EVP of Toronto, Canada-based agency The Licensing Shop, slightly under-stating the case.

So it's not surprising that Mattel's eye-opening success has sparked more interest in girls IP than at any time in recent memory. "The top two growth properties in 2012 overall were [girls brands] Monster High and Lego Friends," says Russ Crupnick, SVP of industry analysis for NPD. "When you see one brand has success with a concept, it turns on the light for others."

Fowler adds that in her anecdotal experience, retailers have been looking for more girls properties since Nickelodeon's Dora the Explorer program started slowing down a few years ago. "The market was demanding it," she says. "There was a real opportunity to bring forth strong girls properties."

New girls in town

With this in mind, The Licensing Shop has picked up international representation rights to a new girls IP from Australia-based Moose Toys. The Zelfs will roll out this fall with

SKUs of small, medium and large dolls targeted at a broad girls four to 10 demo. "The feedback [from retailers] is that they are looking for more girl-oriented licenses," says Paul Solomon, co-CEO of Moose Toys. "So we are optimistic."

"The lead category is collectible mini-dolls," says Solomon. "There are many brands within the doll category and there will always be, so it was imperative that when we developed this brand, we took time to understand what drives patronage within the category."

Zelf's key point of differentiation is its combination of collectibility, fashion and hair play. The dolls, each identified by their "spiketacular hair," live in garden playground Zardenia. They also convey a nurturing aspect—the tagline "Love Your Zelf" plays prominently in the brand's marketing.

Meanwhile, Pinkie Cooper from Boca Raton, Florida-based The Bridge Direct was introduced to the industry earlier this year and will hit retail shelves this summer. Aiming for girls five to eight, the IP is based around a nine-inch fashion doll—who just happens to be part human and part English cocker spaniel.

"People are always projecting human qualities and personalities onto their pets," says Jay Foreman, founder and CEO of The Bridge Direct. "With Pinkie Cooper, we are answering the question, 'What if the dog was really a person?' It might sound silly, but if you think about it, it is equal to the question, 'What if monsters went to high school?'"

The dolls and backstory were designed by well-known Bratz designer Carter Bryant, and the entire initial line consists of two dolls and three accessories. Retailers have been eager to get into the Pinkie Cooper business, and the range will be available at mass-market retailers in the US, and in half a dozen other major international markets, at the beginning of August.

"We feel like we are going to be launching at a very good time, when the consumer is looking for something fresh and new," says Foreman.

And let's not forget the company that brought Bratz into the world. Van Nuys, California-based MGA Entertainment is also introducing a girl-targeted IP later this year and will unveil its new multiple-SKU Mooshka line at Licensing Show.

Aimed at preschool girls, Mooshka has a paper doll aesthetic and includes six separate characters along with finger puppets. The backstory is that the dolls were once made of paper, but one day they "joined hands and through the power of friendship became dolls."

"The positioning of Mooshka is to make them sweet, huggable and oh-so-lovable," says Rachel Moshe, associate brand manager at MGA Entertainment. "It's a unique aesthetic that is nostalgic for moms and also has European feel."

The messaging around the dolls concentrates on themes of friendship and togetherness that will be further reinforced by an eBook set for release in July.

The line includes Mooshka Tots and Girls, 9.5-inch and 13-inch dolls (with Velcro for hand-holding) and paper dolls. At the top of the range is a 15-inch sing-along assortment featuring two dolls that can sing "Ring Around the Rosie." Taken as a whole, the line resembles a traditional Russian matryoshka doll set—the wooden dolls of decreasing size that fit inside one another. "The major retailers we have showed it to are very excited," says Moshe. "It's different from what is out there."

Finally, the show will add recently announced *Gangnam Girls* from Saban Brands to the list. While information is scarce, it's been revealed that the animated fashion- and music-led series will center on five teenage girls who are also magical heroes. While it's still early, Saban is expected to follow the launch of the series with a fashion doll that, like the aforementioned properties, will look to fill a noticeable hole in girls IP offerings. —Gary Rusak

Catering to preschool girls, MGA's Mooshka line will hit US retail shelves this summer



Minecraft builds success one pixel at a time

Open-source indie game *Minecraft* is no longer an underground phenomenon. With reported revenues of US\$137.7 million in 2012, and the announcement earlier this year that 20 million copies of the game have been sold across all platforms, the curtain has finally risen on creator and owner Mojang, a 31-person Stockholm-based game studio.

The game itself, first released in 2009 on PC platforms, brings players into a deep, immersive 3D digital environment where they can participate in an almost limitless number of activities, including combat, building, exploration and even crafting. *Minecraft*'s challenging, customizable and constantly updated digital landscape has spawned a hardcore and dedicated global fanbase, particularly among kids ages eight to 12.

In 2010, Mojang took its first careful step into the world of licensing through a deal with Lego to create playsets inspired by *Minecraft*. "Lego was obviously our top choice," says Carl Manneh, CEO of Mojang. "The original idea actually came from our *Minecraft* online community and we approached [Lego] about it."

The days of Mojang approaching potential licensees, of course, are gone. The company's extremely careful approach to licensing, coupled with fan demand for product, has put it in the enviable position of sitting back and watching the offers roll in.

"We look at licensing as a way to strengthen the overall brand," says Manneh. "One thing we are afraid of is selling out.

We don't want to overexpose our brand."

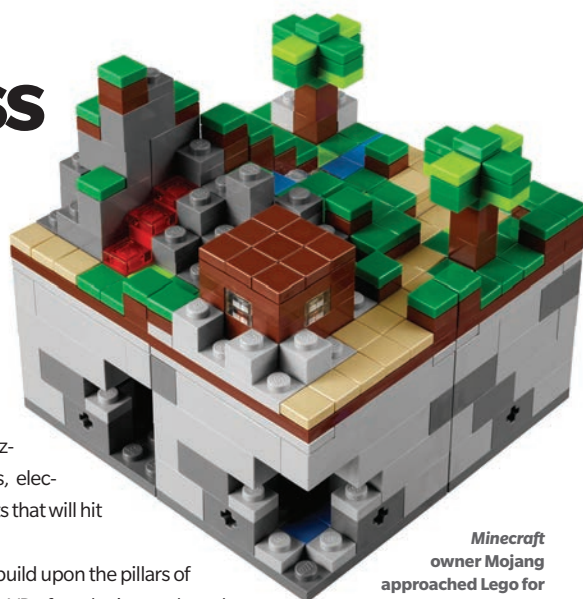
Accordingly, *Minecraft*'s roster of licensees is small, but growing. Recently, Mojang inked a major deal with Sunrise, Florida-based toyco Jazwares to produce action figures, electronic accessories and papercrafts that will hit US retailers this holiday season.

"We are essentially trying to build upon the pillars of the gameplay," says Bill Graham, VP of marketing and product innovation at Jazwares. "Construction and customization of the environment are key play patterns."

Graham says that he expects the lines to hit both specialty and mass retail later this year. "It's a global phenomenon," he says. "It certainly is on retail's radar at this point."

With a publishing deal with UK-based Egmont to produce four handbooks, a *Minecraft* magazine and two more books just announced, Mojang seems to be easing its way into a more robust program. However, Manneh insists that the company does not yet need any third-party help from licensing agents.

"We may come to a point when licensing is consuming us," he admits. "If we find ourselves working with only licensing, then I guess we would look to an outside agency to help us." —Gary Rusak



Minecraft owner Mojang approached Lego for the game's first license, but with 20 million game downloads and a growing, rabid fanbase, licensees are now in hot pursuit

Packaged goodness

There is just something about getting a package in the mail. And that notion informed the development of Box of Awesome, an innovative marketing-driven discovery platform founded by UK entrepreneur Dylan Collins that launched in February.

"The idea came to me because I was trying to solve the discovery problem for brands in the kids area," says Collins. "There is more content every day and yet there is actually less physical retail space. We found that both large and small brands were having trouble communicating to teens and tweens."

The solution lies inside an 8.5-inch x 8.5-inch x 3.5-inch cardboard box that Collins's company stuffs with goods from the likes of Topps, Random House, Panini, Nickelodeon and Mind Candy, among others. Filled with new products and samples, the boxes are then shipped out to a list of kid subscribers in the eight to 14 demo.

"The brands understand that this is true word-of-mouth marketing and that kids don't receive something physical in the mail very often," he says. "It truly stands out."

Collins's team curates the box's content with an eye towards showcasing new, innovative and creative products

from well-known and undiscovered brands. "Our benchmark for products is that they be awesome," he says, adding that the company's mandate is to include one book in each box. "The boxes are substantial in terms of weight and value."

Box of Awesome's brand partners pay a placement fee for being included in the packages and also receive research reports based on the back-end information the company collects.

Parents can pay a nominal subscription fee (US\$4.50 for two months) to guarantee that their child receives boxes that are sent out roughly six times a year. Kids can also sign up on the website (www.boxofawesome.tv) for free and take their chances that they will be mailed one before supplies run out.

Box of Awesome also encourages kids to make and post videos on the site of them opening their box, capturing their often excited and hilarious reactions to its contents.

To enhance its digital footprint, Box of Awesome purchased kids digital trading network Swapit (Swapit.co.uk) in May. Accordingly, the new company is being dubbed SuperAwesome and will work to merge the digital and physical marketing platforms. —Gary Rusak



New UK firm Box of Awesome plans to deliver excitement to kids, viral marketing opps to licensors

Slugging it out

Nerd Corps builds momentum for Slugterra's merch program by keeping it in-house

With the successful spring rollout of Jakks Pacific's initial line of Slugterra toys at Toys 'R' Us across the US, the boys action property, and its creator Nerd Corps Entertainment, may just be on the road to achieving that global mass-market hit first envisioned six years ago. According to Nerd Corps president Ken Faier, the toys are selling out at many TRU locations, and the retailer has asked Jakks to step up delivery in advance of a planned expansion to other retail outlets this fall.

But unlike many other producers of similar size—Nerd Corps currently employs close to 400 people, primarily focused on original and third-party animation production—the company is undertaking the management of its burgeoning IP in-house. When you're competing with the likes of giants like Disney Consumer Products and WBCP, it's a job that requires dozens, surely? In this case, not so much. With a team of seven, led by licensing industry veteran Juli Boylan, head of global licensing and merchandising, Nerd Corps has the Slugterra program firing on all cylinders.

The Vancouver, Canada-based company had tapped licensing agents to drive North American programs for its properties in the past, most notably MGM Entertainment for its 2007 boys action series *Storm Hawks*. But when it came to *Slugterra*, which started airing on Disney XD in the US last fall and will be rolling out on its global channels over the next few months, Nerd Corps decided to invest a bit more and keep its management in-house as much as possible. "We learned that it wasn't that much less work to have an agent compared to doing it in-house," says Faier. "It's costlier to do in-house, but only marginally." Notable added expenses came in the form of taking a booth at Licensing Show and hiring someone with Boylan's expertise and retail relationships.

Coming to Nerd Corps from a 14-year stint in the executive ranks at Sony Consumer Products, was an adjustment Boylan admits. But she's found that the relative smallness of the organization makes it a decisive and responsive licensor—something that's often impossible for large studio orgs mired in levels of approvals and red tape. "Our processes and approvals are much quicker and more timely," she says. It also enables effective coordination of licensing and broadcast partners and product releases. For example, the property's iOS game, *Slug It Out!*, and website are tagged on Jakks's toy

packages that contain reveal codes for the digital products. Boylan also works with Disney XD to coordinate the release of new *Slugterra* eps with the retail rollout schedule. "It's amazing to see what we've been able to get done," she notes.

Powering the entire enterprise that makes this small team work so efficiently is a *Slugterra* partner digital tool kit developed by Nerd Corps. Faier says it took about 18 months to build, primarily through a full integration of the company's production and brand activities led by director of brand development Nancy Lees. (She's there to ensure that the overall brand promise/DNA is present in all its iterations.) Along with the mandatory style guide, the kit contains a retail presentation, a one-sheet, show footage and information tailored to what specific partners need to quickly understand the size and engagement of the IP's audience (right now, the sweet spot is boys nine to 10). With retailers, for instance, that starts with when and how often the series airs, ratings and how much time kids are spending on *Slugterra*'s website, to start. "We have an unbelievable amount of materials at our disposal," says Boylan. "I have never experienced a company that's so forthcoming."

As for next steps, Boylan is looking to round out the licensee roster for the program's next phase in the US, and is appointing licensing agents internationally. Stateside, expect to see soft goods like t-shirts and sleepwear, trading cards and publishing joining Jakks' expanded toy rollout this fall, but there won't be 50 categories on offer—it's a slow, strategic build. "We have a story at retail to tell now, and we want to make sure the demand is there," says Boylan. "We're not ready for bedding yet, for example, but I have the privilege to say, 'It's not time.'" —Lana Castleman

A successful toy launch at Toys 'R' Us this spring means Jakks's *Slugterra* toys are headed to even more retailers this fall

DIY brand-building

A partner tool kit is essential in aligning interests and activities around a brand. According to Nerd Corps president Ken Faier, here are key questions you need to ask before building your own.

1. How does the brand transcend more than one iteration? In essence, ask yourself what does your audience want to do after watching the driving show to determine what brand extensions to pursue.
2. Determine the best audio and visual representations of the brand that can communicate with its audience and licensing and broadcast partners. What will tell kids, for example, "Watch this and then go there (i.e. the iOS app, website or toy store)."
3. What information is required to understand audience size and engagement? Tailor the information to your intended audience. For example, what key pieces of info does a retailer or a licensee need to sell your property effectively?

American Greetings' special delivery



AGP's comedic *Packages From Planet X* has a worldwide TV deal with Disney XD and consumer products plans in its sights

American Greetings Properties is taking a decidedly masculine turn at Licensing Show this year. Known for its girl-skewing bestsellers like Strawberry Shortcake and Care Bears, the licensor will be showcasing *Packages From Planet X*. The property includes a 52 x 11-minute animated series (along with two 13-minute webisodes), co-produced with Toronto, Canada-based DHX Media, that's landed a prime placement with Disney XD Worldwide, including the US.

The adventure-comedy follows the exploits of a typical 15-year-old boy who, out of the blue, finds strange deliveries

from space arriving on his doorstep. The packages are actually meant for an alien on Earth and contain special powers, but they're also being pursued by the evil villain Copernicus.

"I think every kid loves to get presents and most only get them twice a year," notes David Levine, VP and GM of Disney XD Worldwide. The channel worked with AGP to develop the series and will roll it out on DXD US in July and worldwide (except Canada, where Teletoon holds first-window rights) later this year. "We felt it was a fresh, relatable idea with an endless source of fun," he adds.

Sean Gorman, VP of development and production at AGP, says the series has an irreverent tone and sharp humor that sets it apart from other tween IPs. "There isn't a whole lot of sci-fi out there now," he says. "It [stars] a relatable kid with a sarcastic sidekick, and the humor doesn't pander. There is a lot of physicality, but it's smart, too."

Levine says the series will be right at home with other Disney XD fare like *Randy Cunningham: 9th Grade Ninja* that focuses on an eight to 12 boys demo.

While AGP will wait to see how the show is received on-air before inking licensing deals, Gorman believes the potential is there for a full program in 2014. "We see it as a licensable property," he says. "It has a lot of action and a lot of gadgets in it, and anyone we have showed it to reacts right away." —Gary Rusak

LicenseeLowdown

Percy3D sends invitation to the future

Who Toronto, Canada-based Percy3D derives its name from the personalized aspect of its new digital platform that can repurpose and personalize video in a 3D format. "A lot of people are working with video, but we are actually working inside of it," says Julie Steiner, president of Percy3D. "We can take existing video, or video that you create, and users can then insert text or pictures into the video using the same technology that big movie studios do."

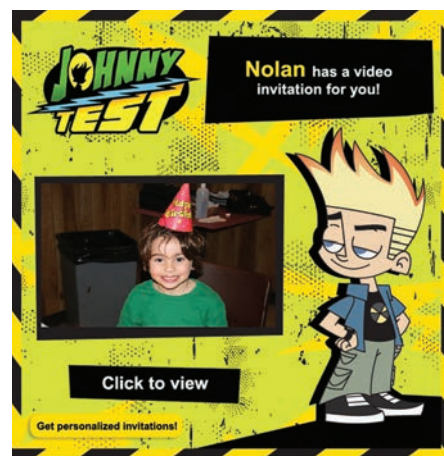
What For its first application for the platform, the company is innovating the social expressions category with video-based party invitations also known as PercyVites. "We are like a premium version of an Evite," explains Steiner. "We can make personalized birthday invitations and bring them into the digital space."

Through www.percy3d.com, parents can design 30-second 3D-animated invitations (US\$0.99 apiece) that incorporate their children's photos. Percy3D also offers a growing stable of licensed

characters to dress up the invites, including Johnny Test, Caillou and Arthur from DHX Media. Other products in the line include a 10-second Thank You "card" (US\$0.79) and a Video Party Memory Compilation (US\$2.99) that uses the same platform to share video and photos from the party.

Latest innovation The company is looking to ramp up the number of properties it can offer its customers in Q3 this year and will be on the hunt at Licensing Show this month. "We are looking for those characters that drive devotion so much so that kids want them to be a part of their birthday party," says Steiner. "It's primarily for kids around the ages of 10 and 11, so we are [looking to license] brands that have great recognition and good video content we can work with."

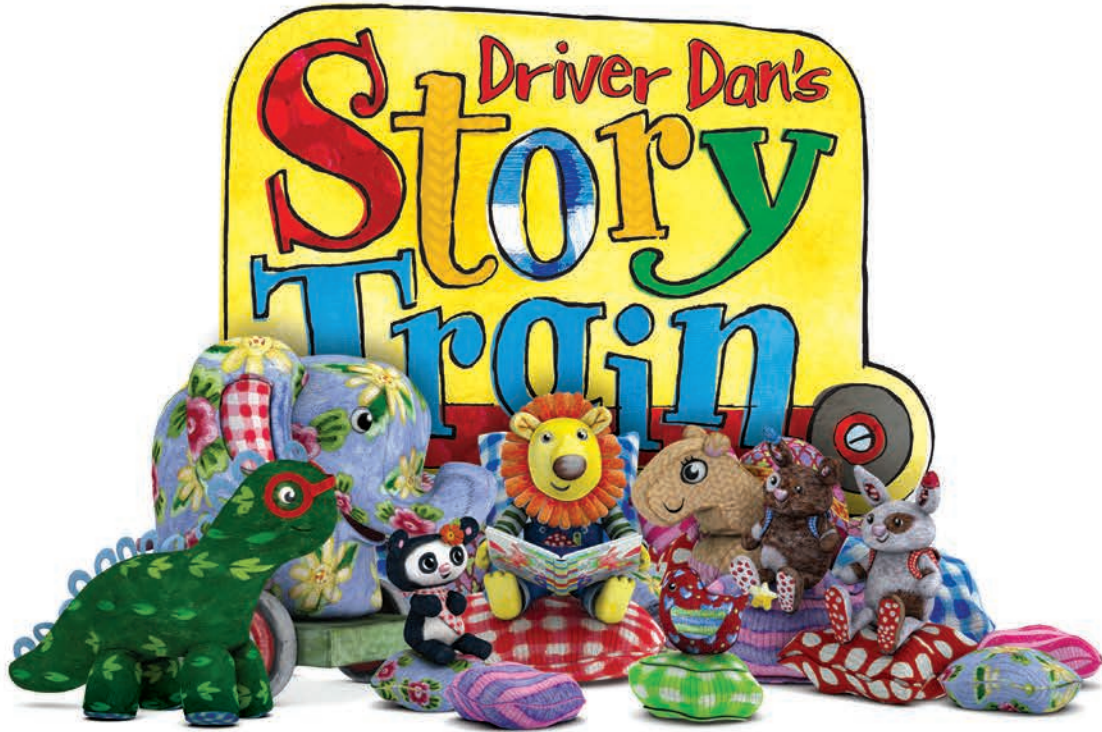
What's Next Steiner says that PercyVites is only the first application of the company's proprietary platform. While still likely two or three years away, she foresees



the customization of video being utilized by brands for marketing as a logical extension. "In terms of brand advocacy, I can see the platform being used as a branded digital envelope," she says, explaining that digital loyalty program cards or gift cards would be an ideal fit. "Instead of a piece of paper you have in your wallet, you could have a 10- to 15-second customized 3D video that delivers your reward or discount."

Contact Julie Steiner, president of Percy3D (416-642-4304 ext 101, julie@perc3d.com). —Gary Rusak

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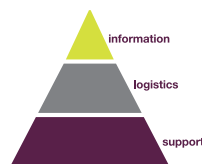
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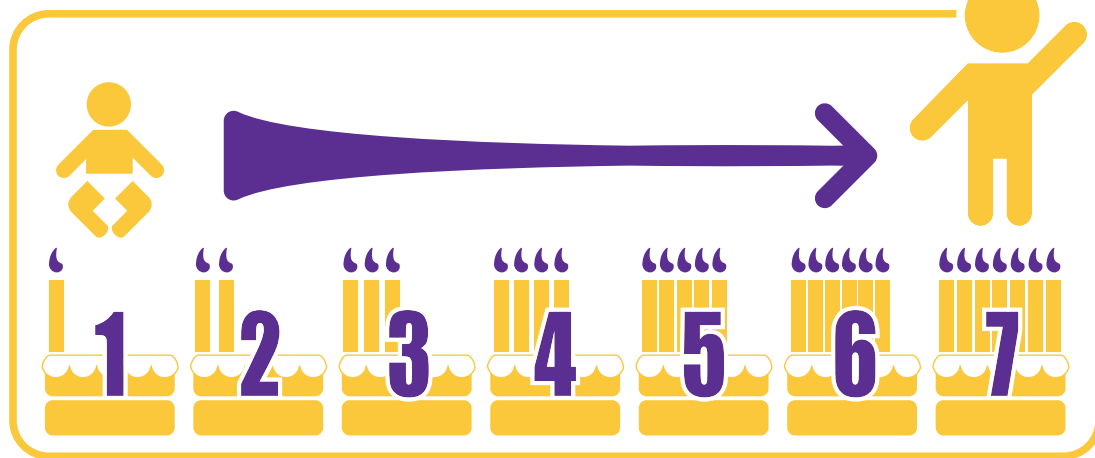


The Global Child

The kids entertainment market is truly global. Yet at no point in our lives is our own culture more important to us than during childhood.

Content creators around the world must pay close attention to the growth of the global child (and parent) as their love of all things international evolves to something a little more...local.

BY GARY POPE



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Given the increasing ownership of technology, reach of the internet and the continued ascent of global children's entertainment and digital media, it follows that cultural influence on children is becoming more universal in nature. So does that then mean that childhood is becoming more homogenized—that no matter what creed, culture or race they are born into, a child will eventually become the global child?

We wanted to find out. We wanted to properly understand the trends in parenting and childhood across the globe in terms of all kinds of consumption that could determine the validity of the notion of a global child and—if they do exist—what their parents have to say about it.

The notion of globalization is as old as time. Romans did it. The Vikings did it. Dare I say as a Brit, we did it, too? And today we no longer need a longboat or Her Majesty's Ships of the Line to compel consumption of our entertainment and culture. No, we've got the internet, which is a much more effective and far less messy mode of distribution that ensures future generations of children will just keep on soaking it up.

And here's where our responsibility, as the creators of content and experiences for children, both entertaining and educational, lies.

We must decide whether we are invaders, traders or colonialists before we arrive in the living room of the global

child. Kid Industries' research into the effects of globalization on the modern family absolutely demonstrates that if we impose ourselves too hard, or if we don't give the children something valuable in exchange for their attention (and their parents' cash), then we will be shown the door and locked out for good.

The culture in which we grow and develop is as important as the genes we are born with. Until the age of approximately seven, biology is the main driver of child development. If we were to remove language as a barrier, we could place children from each of our chosen countries in the same room together and until they hit seven, they would all play, talk and bicker perfectly well. They are all governed by the same early developmental pathways. Put those same children together when they reach the age of nine, and it would be a different story altogether—at that age, a child's environmental culture takes the driver's seat.

The problems for parents, though, seem to come when they realize that their child is no longer growing up as an Indian child, for example, but is imbibing and assimilating cultural influences from the likes of the US and UK that might make them somehow less traditionally Indian.

The following data, drawn from Kids Industries' recent study *The Global Child*, highlights emerging digital trends amongst parents and children across territories.

The method

In February, we identified the 10 countries we felt would help form a representative cultural landscape of the planet. We based our choices on a range of criteria including economic indicators, perceived influence (regional, global, political, cultural and economical), geographical position, population size and projected economic and population growth.

We then decided to focus on India, Brazil, China, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the UK and US, Nigeria, South Africa and Australia as our countries of interest.

We recruited more than 10,000 parents of children ages two to 12 across these 10 very different countries and took great trouble to ensure that the subjects were broadly comparable in terms of socio-economic status across territories. Perhaps most importantly, we made sure that the respondents were all very outward-looking and media literate. We wanted opinion-makers and early adopters to help us understand what the future landscape of globalization is going to look like for families.

The parents were then asked to consider just one of their children as they answered our 50 questions, and the results have been astonishing.

Family consumption patterns and parents' perspectives on education, the future, modern media, technology and the erosion of childhood were all investigated. We also asked parents about how they spend time as a family and the importance they place on this.

Parents and culturally relevant content

Beyond a wealth of insight around the aforementioned and other categories, the thing that has really hit home for us is that despite many similarities between global parents, the significance they place on offering their children culturally specific content varies wildly. It seems that some countries will effectively take what they're given, while others are becoming ever-more demanding that high quality localized content is made available to their kids. These parents, it turns out, are increasingly holding the purse strings of the global family market.

We tallied up the importance each country's parents place on culturally relevant content (see chart opposite). In speaking to parents, it became clear that there is a growing fear that their children are increasingly exposed to foreign content that is shaping kids' perceptions and values—in many ways defining them as global children.

The fact that parents in China and India—which together represent nearly half the world's population—see the need for local content as very important,

and rank it significantly higher than the more developed western markets, is very telling. That these emerging titans wish to have content that's relevant to them made readily available is not surprising at all, and maybe it shouldn't be just the big studios that are listening.

The majority of the parents, meanwhile, indicated local content was "quite important" and that maintaining a balance between their own and other cultures is a concern.

South African, US, Australian and UK respondents, for their part, said it was not important, as long as their children enjoy the content, which is perhaps indicative of where these countries find themselves in the global cultural landscape.

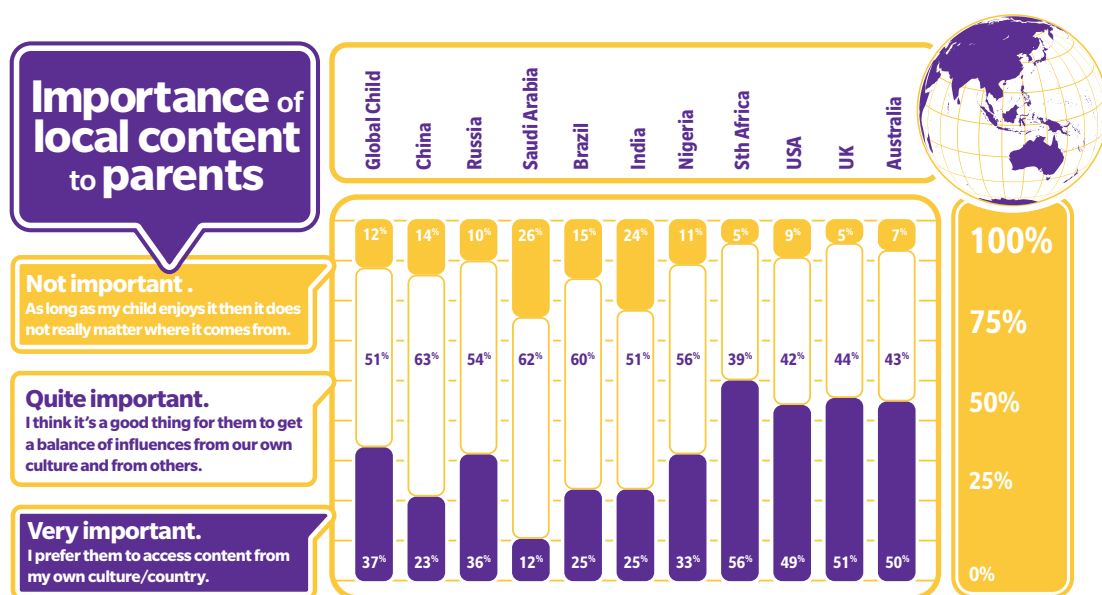
Beyond media, as we would expect from children ages seven to 12, the significant figures in their lives like parents and grandparents are very influential. Their heroes also tend to be drawn from their own culture, from family and friends to community leaders and people in the public eye.

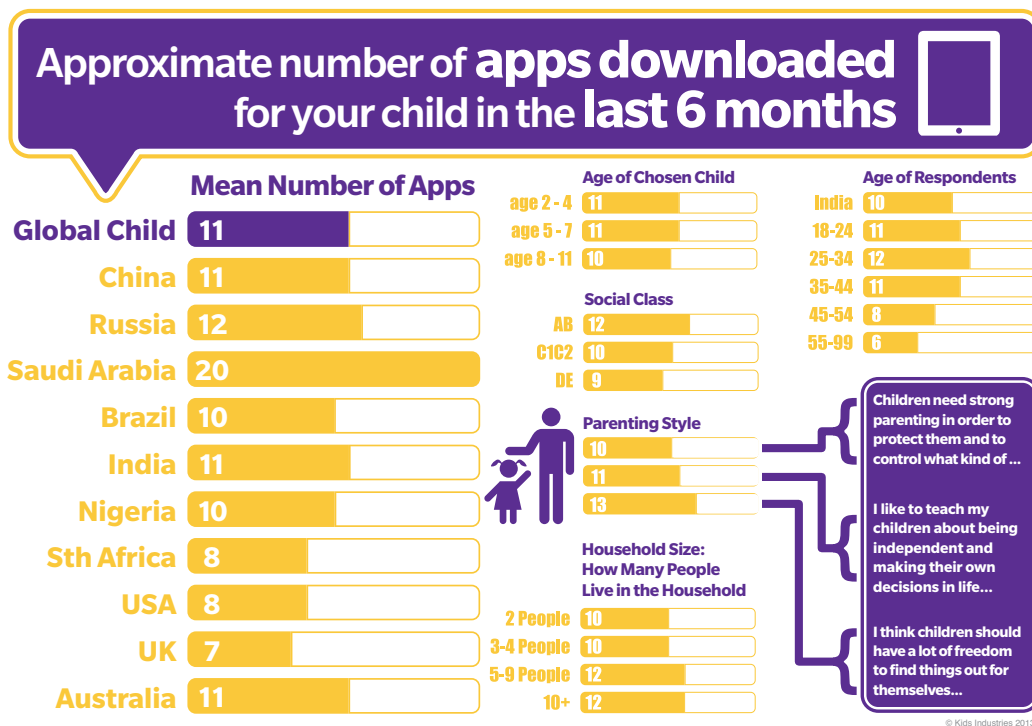
It's also worth noting that the first generation of Digital Natives are now parents. They are buying more apps and are more open to the cultural influence of the global village than any other group, but the fact remains they also want their children to grow and understand what it is to be a citizen of their respective nations.

Mobile, a cultural carrier

The world is shrinking in terms of cultural influences because the global child continues to adopt digital media. And the leapfrogging of the messy business of cables in favor of wireless networks might just be the thing that catapults emerging nations forward. We all know mobile is king, and now the data bears this out...

Digital TV ownership has followed trends in relatively under-developed markets such as African countries, where 62% of the respondents overall own a digital TV, and as we would expect, the prevalence of laptop and tablet computers is very high. But the really interesting insights come when we look to mobile ownership—particularly in Africa.





Mobile phone ownership is slightly higher in Nigeria compared to the other countries in the analysis. Ownership of smart phones is also high, suggesting that smart phone adoption has been strong in African markets—another example of how the developing markets are leapfrogging at the expense of the relatively cumbersome computer.

In the US, 22% of respondents own a Kindle Fire tablet and 19% own a Kindle or other eReader, which is significantly higher than in any other territory, while the lowest ownership of this technology occurs in Saudi Arabia. iPad ownership, however, is reaching the 50% mark in some countries. And in the rest of the world, between 25% and 44% of parents intend to purchase an iPad in the next six months, which means that the market could expand dramatically within the next two to three years.

The state of app ownership

With those technology ownership statistics in mind, we thought it might be interesting to share with you a little peek at that instantaneous cultural juggernaut—the not-so-humble app.

The global child downloads approximately 11 digital apps every six months—an interesting decrease of over 30% from our last study 18 months ago. Maybe apps represent a “normal” part of childhood already? Regardless, they’re here to stay, and the novelty of downloading them has certainly eased up.

The global child in the UK, US and South Africa downloaded the least number of apps. Saudi Arabian kids, however, buck the trend, downloading as many as 20 apps within the space of six months. There are no significant differences in the number of apps downloaded for older and

younger children, which in itself is interesting—younger children are as keen to participate as the older ones. Research has shown that parents download apps for younger children less frequently, but the average number of apps downloaded does not differ. It appears that when parents purchase apps for younger kids, they download more apps each time (perhaps after they have done some research).

The number of downloads rises with economic class and in households with a more liberal parenting style, and it decreases in line with the age of parents (parents over 55 download six apps over the course of six months, while parents ages 25 to 34 download 12 apps in the same timeframe). In terms of the types of apps downloaded, educational apps were by far most popular,

especially in BRIC countries and Africa. Saudi Arabian and Nigerian parents downloaded the most entertainment apps.

Adding it up

The creation of culturally relevant content, products and services is important to individual parents, and as they pay our salaries, we should be giving serious thought to their perspectives.

Some notable ventures into cross-cultural adaptation have seen success. As former GM and EVP of Walt Disney Studios Jason Reed noted, heeding the advice of Chinese writers to make a localized version of *High School Musical* “more local by making it more American” by replacing kung fu with basketball, made for a better reception in China. It also demonstrates the pragmatism required to truly make a global franchise local—sometimes it just doesn’t happen how you think it will.

We do live in a global community bound by consumption of brands, both consumer goods and entertainment, but it hasn’t homogenized childhood or parenting. In fact, it might just have the opposite effect. Faith, culture, political ideology and economic development are increasingly shaping childhood to be more culturally specific than perhaps our models allow.

Sure, the pervasiveness of the internet and the ease with which content travels the planet has helped to create the global child. However, with this great power comes even greater responsibility—we have to empower children everywhere on the planet to be the best that they can be. **k**

Gary Pope is the co-founder of Kids Industries, a global strategy agency specializing in the family market. With offices in London and Cape Town, South Africa, Kid Industries offers insight, strategy and digital services. See www.kidsindustries.com for more info.

More than athletics

Nickelodeon examines the importance of sports to kids' development



BY ERIN MILLER

In last month's Kaleidoscope report, we explored the wide world of sports from a kids' perspective. Having looked at the sports they like to play, and delved into their overall feelings about playing sports, part two of this report examines the importance of sports from a developmental standpoint and how kids approach sports differently by age.

Achievement and mastery is a major developmental life stage for kids and tweens—it's core to their development. Playing sports contributes to their growth in a big way, and not just from an achievement perspective. Sports help kids understand friendships and fair play. They're testing the boundaries of what's right and wrong, and even learning how to deal with complex socio-emotions through common situations, such as coping with winning and losing, or perhaps the disappointment of not getting enough play time.

How kids approach and experience sports differs by age. On average, kids typically begin playing sports around age five. From this age through to age eight, sports manifests in a purely fun way, with an emphasis on the enjoyment of playing. While kids may be playing on a structured team (with a coach and teammates), they're more likely to have permission to be less structured at times, which feeds directly into the fun of just playing the game. Kids at this age also tend to experiment with all kinds of organized sports. Friends and parents are also often an entry point into the sports kids choose to play.

When kids reach age nine or 10, certain pressures begin to kick in when it comes to playing—pressure from coaches, parents and themselves. This is seemingly tied to coaches, parents and sometimes teammates emphasizing more serious game play. Interestingly, there can often be a disconnect between kids and coaches/parents as the kids are still focused on playing for the fun of the game. That said, nine- to 10-year-olds are looking for, and enjoy, the structure of an organized team. They're also very into the fairness and teamwork that sports have to offer. From a generational perspective, kids at this age have grown up to be collaborative, and their entire lives have been scheduled. It comes as no surprise that they take the same approach to playing sports.



By age 11 or 12, a true sense of competitiveness kicks in. Kids have a more complete understanding of what it means to be competitive, and that competitiveness can be perceived as a positive or a negative attribute. Coaches and other players are likely to emphasize a more serious play environment, thus leading kids to take their own game play up a notch. Though kids may be playing more seriously, sports at their core are still about having fun, so it's common for this age group to actively work out how to take a sport seriously without sacrificing the fun and love of the game.

As kids reach their early teen years (13 to 14), performance and excelling are key. There is a clear understanding that performance correlates with game play, which in turn can often add pressure and stress. At this age, those playing on teams are focused on a fewer number of sports, typically participating in ones in which they feel they have the opportunity to "be a good player." Additionally, there are aspirational goals attached to playing sports. For example, kids at this age are likely to recognize that excelling in a sport can pay for further education through college scholarships. They're also hyper-aware of teen athletes who have made a career out of playing sports (i.e., Olympic gymnasts, swimmers and snowboarders). Across all ages, "being a professional athlete when I grow up" pops with boys and girls. And as young professional athletes continue to emerge in the sports world, the opportunity to be a part of this elite group can feel within reach for these young athletes. **K**

This concludes our report on kids and sports. Stay tuned for a brand-new Kaleidoscope next issue, where we'll take a look at what toys make it off the shelves and into homes.

For more information, contact kaleidoscope@nick.com

(Source: Nickelodeon Kids and Family Research, January, 2013; Touchstone Research. Quantitative Sample Size: N = 750 kids)

A major focus of the Brand and Consumer Insights Department at Nickelodeon Kids & Family is to live and breathe kid culture. We continually track and identify trends, and explore what it means to be a kid and teen today. In an effort to keep you in touch with our audience and give a voice to our consumer, we've created the Nickelodeon Kaleidoscope. Every month, Kaleidoscope will capture key areas of interest across the kid and family cultural landscape, provide an understanding of attitudes and behaviors, and report on trends and buzz.

Artistic drive spurs Ian's creativity

10-year-old from California prefers parkour and Lego over screen time



Ian wants to be a sculptor when he grows up because “you get to create whatever you want... a dragon or a statue.” For now, he is a dancing, singing, building, violin-playing fiend. The son of artists, Ian craves activities that involve experimentation and open-ended outcomes, like Lego and parkour. In fact, he prefers creative experiences to time in front of a screen. “I’m allowed one hour [of screen time] after school, but usually I don’t do that. I play Lego.”

Ian found some of his earlier pursuits too confining. He abandoned gymnastics, jazz and ballet because “there wasn’t enough creation. You always had to have your arms a certain way.” Parkour, on the other hand, “is like free running.” And while Lego building kits are all the rage for kids Ian’s age, he tends to jumble the pieces and make his own designs. For Ian, it’s “funner to make stuff by yourself than to work from instructions.” Characteristic of his personality, he’s not afraid to fail—if a structure doesn’t work, he just takes it apart and tries another way.

Ian’s uninhibited attitude toward the arts is atypical for kids 10-plus. Somewhere in late elementary school, most kids start to specialize, and, spurred by feedback from others, abandon activities they feel they aren’t good at. Often that means abandoning the arts.

Talent aside, though, arts activities help kids develop transferable skills like perseverance, problem-solving and mental agility. Media creation is itself an art, and has the power to encourage all kids to continue creating dragons and statues, even if they won’t be as beautiful as Ian’s. —Sarah Chumsky



Insight Kids is a research and strategic consulting company dedicated to catalyzing our clients to build innovative, impactful and inspiring experiences for kids and families. To be further inspired by Reagan and Insight Kids, visit www.insightstrategygroup.com/insightkids/.

Cool or Not? The online pastimes edition



Pinterest

| Boys 8 to 11 (92) | Girls 8 to 11 (123) | Boys 12 to 15 (146) | Girls 12 to 15 (150) | | Boys 8 to 11 (277) | Girls 8 to 11 (282) | Boys 12 to 15 (280) | Girls 12 to 15 (283) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| 13% | 27.6% | 11.6% | 24% | Totally way cool * | 46.2% | 51.1% | 30.7% | 26.9% |
| 12% | 17.1% | 8.2% | 22.7% | Very cool * | 22.7% | 20.6% | 25% | 22.3% |
| 30.4% | 28.5% | 26% | 30.7% | Kinda cool * | 18.8% | 19.5% | 25.7% | 35% |
| 18.5% | 8.9% | 26.7% | 9.3% | Not cool * | 5.1% | 3.5% | 9.6% | 8.5% |
| 26.1% | 17.9% | 27.4% | 13.3% | Totally un-cool * | 7.2% | 5.3% | 8.9% | 7.4% |
| 69% | 58.9% | 50% | 49.7% | Don't know what it is | 5.8% | 3.4% | 4.4% | 4.7% |



Creating
own videos

* Excludes "Don't know what it is" responses



Cool or Not? is part of KidSay's Feb/Mar 2013 Trend Tracker. These one-of-a-kind research reports are published 10 times a year and provide a quantitative and qualitative picture of kids' likes, dislikes and trends gathered through in-school surveys with US kids ages five to 15. Contact Bob Reynolds (913-390-8110 or bob@kidsay.com).



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Expand and contract

The US children's digital book industry is growing exponentially with the help of more consumable content. But while the numbers seem big, developers and publishers are still forced to think small.



BY WENDY GOLDMAN GETZLER

Recently, Graham Farrar's four-year-old son went on a reading binge. The kindergardener—whose father is the co-founder and CEO of mobile publisher zuuka—developed a strong affinity for the *Meet Biscuit* storybook iPad app, which he would sift through more than 10 times in a row in just one sitting.

Maybe it's because the book app, which uses animated stills from the popular HarperCollins series, was developed by his dad with him in mind. It's also possible that the younger Farrar is on the cusp of joining a class of young boys, known as reluctant readers, who are finding more reading inspiration in digital book offerings.

In fact, Scholastic's biannual *Kids & Family Reading Report* found that 25% of boys who have read an eBook say that they are now reading more books for fun. It's undeniable that electronic book usage among kids is growing—the number of US children reading eBooks nearly doubled between 2010 and 2012, up from 25% to 46%. The Association of American Publishers and Book Industry Study Group found that eBooks accounted for 20% of total US book publishing sales in 2012, or US\$3 billion. And within that, the children's and young adult eBook category drew US\$469 million, a 117% rise over 2011.

But while the numbers scream big, developers and large publishers alike are still thinking small, both in terms of the overall piece eBooks contribute to the total US\$15-billion publishing industry, and the actual mode of content delivery.

"What's attracting kids to digital books is the content," says Farrar. "There's a demand for bite-sized media. Look at popular games like *Tiny Wings* and *Angry Birds*, where casual experiences can be had in five minutes. The same is true for eBooks."

Farrar's iStoryTime library is home to more than 200 book apps, all of which are based on licensed properties such as *Ice Age*, *The Croods* and *Smurfs*. iStoryTime also develops content for large publishers like HarperCollins, with whom the company has developed five *Biscuit* titles for iOS, Kindle, Android and Nook devices.

Farrar says his company's ability to achieve 14 number-one book titles in the US App Store is partly due to the character recognition found in its products. "Kids like their characters. There's an element to having Shrek there that motivates them to have reading experiences," he says, noting that brand recognition and discoverability are both key to standing out from the 50,000 apps being submitted to the App Store each month. "Right now, discoverability is a real challenge. If you create something with Daisy the dog and you're not in the Top 10 on iTunes, no one is going to know it exists. It could be amazing, but unknown." That's what drove his company to develop a channel-like home for kids digital books last month, putting all titles for the demo into an iStoryTime app that will house all the content on one virtual bookshelf.

As well as licensed book apps sell, Corinne Helman, VP of digital publishing and business development at HarperCollins Children's, says at an industry-wide level



Photo: flickingerbrad

publishers are sticking more to traditional eBooks than interactive story apps. (To be sure, standard eBooks are available in digital bookstores, such as the iBookstore, while book apps are sold in app stores and include more interactive features.)

"We all ran to the app as fast as we could, but discovered that they are expensive to make, Apple promotes very few of them, and buying ad space doesn't generally work," says Helman. She adds that of the "big six" US publishing houses, the number of licensed book apps being published has decreased by 75%.

Still, HarperCollins has seen digital book app sales rising quickly for popular brands such as Big Nate. The gaming app developed by Night & Day Studios is based on the best-selling book, and Helman says the early success of the app coincides with the popularity of the printed Big Nate titles.

Helman also believes that kids and young adult eBooks are getting shorter. She says serialized novels and shorter, 150-page per title, series are almost always standard for the tween and teen demos because they cost less and are more easily consumed. In fact, Helman says she is seeing the strongest rise in eBook sales among the teen and tween segment, although the latter hasn't experienced the same device penetration. And in terms of digital picture books for young kids, which HarperCollins commissions third-party developers to make, less than 2% of the market is digital. "In general, your e-sales are about 5% to 10% of

print books. These numbers are true for children's overall, but teen is more like 30%," she says. "The fastest growth is happening among six- to 12-year-olds, but the majority of sales are happening in teen."

Even though the numbers are rising, "the physical book is still driving everything," says Jon Anderson, president and publisher of Simon & Schuster's children's division. Scholastic's *Kids & Family Reading Report* also showed that a full 80% of kids who read eBooks still read books for fun primarily in print.

Anderson says S&S's most successful kids eBooks to date are titles that have been the most successful in print, which include the female-skewing Cassandra Clare series and Dork Diaries titles. (He says girls books almost always outsell boys books.) "We will adapt from the physical book where appropriate. But parents view apps and physical books as separate things—apps tend to be seen more as games and not reading."

Still, zuuka's Graham Farrar thinks the continued proliferation of mobile devices will cause digital book consumption to rise significantly more this year. "Tablets only hold a 25% market penetration in the US. I think the iPad Mini, for instance, is a better device for kids books than a Tom Clancy novel. It has bright colors, interactivity and sound effects," he says. "I think once more people get their hands on the devices, and see what can be done with digital storytelling, it will be enormous." ³

TechWatch Keeping an eye on the gadget scene

The app that loves kids back



What it is

Designed to help children with sensory processing challenges such as autism or ADHD, the T.Jacket is putting an undeniably positive spin on the mobile-product integration trend. The tablet-powered T.Jacket is a wearable jacket with a corresponding smartphone app that triggers levels of pressure to the body—thereby simulating a hug.

How it works

Using patent-pending haptic technology, T.Jacket is powered by embedded air bags that are activated wirelessly and allow for variable pressure. The deep pressure therapy produced by the jacket is meant to produce a calming effect and increase attention. And the T.Cloud technology also allows parents to monitor when and where the jacket is being worn.

What it means

While initially meant for children with special needs, the product could very well find itself in the hands—or arms—of parents and kids who are apart for extended periods. With a pre-order price tag of US\$399, there is likely little room for novelty, but the fact that touchscreens are literally simulating human touch means that similar technologies could soon be harnessed for more entertainment purposes. —Wendy Goldman Getzler



New Kid in Town

The parent track

New kid-focused SVOD service Kidoodle ramps up

to serve both kids' and parents' diversifying on-demand needs. From father and son Dan and Mike Lowe—CEO and president, respectively, of Calgary, Canada-based A Parent Company—the Kidoodle.TV SVOD service will feature content for kids 12 and under when it launches in North America this summer. Supported by a staff of 20 global consultants and partners, the service, incubated for roughly 18 months, is as much for parents as it is for kids—its user experience allows for content restrictions based on age and ratings, customized playlists and allowable playtime.

Culling content “We’ve identified a large demand for streaming services in the kids market,” says Mike Lowe, president of the privately funded company. “And our early research shows parents currently have two main concerns with internet TV—what kids are being exposed to, and guilt stemming from putting their kids in front of the screen.” Lowe says Kidoodle.TV is bent on solving those core concerns. The service wants to feature as much educational content as it does entertainment, and it will stream shows that promote health and wellness. Among the entertainment content already licensed is approximately 800 hours from DHX Media—the largest acquisition to date for Kidoodle.TV in terms of hours—which includes series such as *Inspector Gadget*, *Rastamouse* and *Strawberry Shortcake*.

Not Netflix In distancing itself from market trailblazer Netflix, Lowe says Kidoodle.TV’s features focus on monitoring what kids are watching, and allowing for selection by title and age. “There’s no adult content that kids can fall into, and some of the content we have is educational and mentor-based stuff that Netflix won’t have,” he contends. For instance, a show that teaches kids how to be a fireman would fall into that mentoring content category. “Parents will also be able to customize playlists with entertainment and educational content that will hold their child’s interest.”

Mommy brain Initially, a subscription to Kidoodle.TV will run US\$4.99 per month for PC, iOS and Android platforms, with a planned expansion to gaming consoles and smart TVs on the horizon. The launch of Kidoodle.TV will be accompanied by a full-scale marketing campaign that specifically targets digital moms. “We are trying to build an army of moms,” says Lowe. “We are going grassroots because we want to create a relationship that will shape the service to meet their demands. Moms are making a majority of the decisions, and we have built something to ease parents’ lives.” Also helping to dictate future decisions on the product itself are the company’s developers, many of whom are parents themselves, as well as a deep pool of data collected from across digital sources. Also in the forefront for Kidoodle.TV is the global market beyond the US and Canada, but Lowe says he first wants to grow the product domestically. With his father Dan having been in the tech business for many decades, building technology for such companies as Microsoft and Intel, the Lowe duo says Kidoodle.TV will be the first of several ambitious children’s products primed for growth. —Wendy Goldman Getzler

The idea As kids’ viewing habits increasingly move into over-the-top (OTT) territory, and video streaming giants like Netflix accrue content and subscribers at a swift pace, the need among parents to compartmentalize their options may be reaching a peak. That notion is leading services like Kidoodle.TV to spring from the ground up

The Digits

Numbers that speak volumes about kids and technology

Wake-up call:
A full **89%**
of 18- to 24-year-olds
check their smart
phones within
15 minutes of
waking up
(eMarketer)



And **93%** of American teens
have a computer or have
access to one at home
(Pew Research Center)



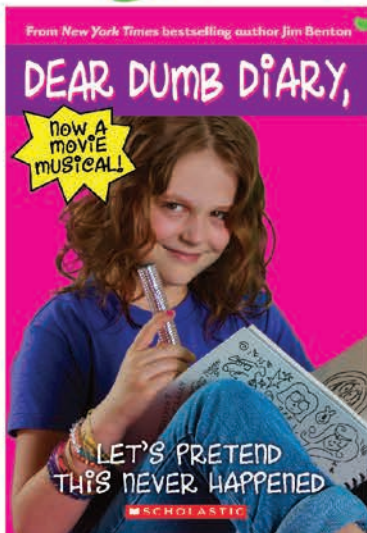
Tween girls who are members
of the FashionPlaytes online community
prefer *Temple Run* and
Subway Surfers
game apps to *Instagram*,
Pandora and *Angry Birds*
(FPgirl Market Insights)

Keep on playing in the free world:
Thanks to mobile devices,

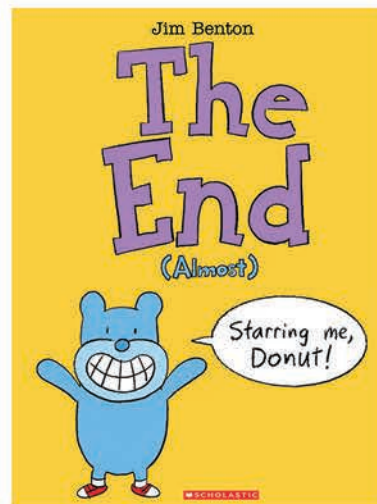
110 million
people are playing more
free-to-play games than
they were last year
(PlaySpan)

In the UK,
kids add an estimated
US\$47 million
to monthly app bills
due to in-app purchases
(Windows Phone)

Jim Benton



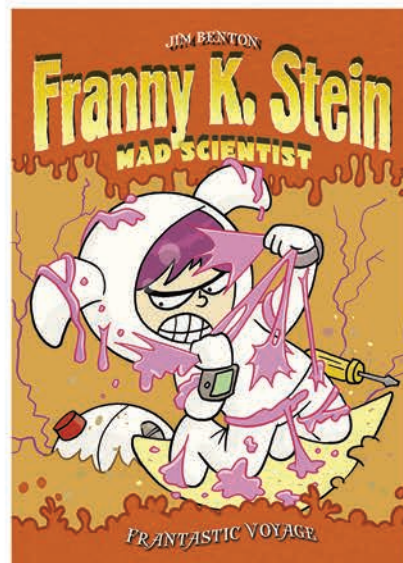
DEAR DUMB DIARY the movie musical.
Produced by Jerry Zucker Productions and based on the New York Times bestsellers. Airing in Sept. on The Hallmark Channel, with plans for sequels already in the works.



The End (Almost)
A rule-breaking picture book from Scholastic, launching Spring 2014. It's featured on the spring catalog cover and in additional promotions.



Jim Benton Board Books
A series of kooky, silly, board books with funny characters and themes, coming from Scholastic in 2104-2015.



Franny K Stein, Mad Scientist
The star of this beloved, award-winning book series is ready for her close-up.

Booth C32 at the Licensing Show in Las Vegas.
Jim Benton: 248-312-8713
The Gotham Group • Julie Kane-Ritsch • 310-285-0001

Emerging markets,

LICENSING
SHOW



emerging IPs

The growing BRIC countries continue to be a priority for globally minded North American licensors looking to expand their IPs' reach. But what about their competition? A new breed of kids properties are finding big success in their local markets, giving Mickey and Co. a run for their money at home while fuelling global aspirations.

BY GARY RUSAK



Going on a decade, the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) have been generating buzz in licensing circles as “the next big markets” for kids IP with global aspirations. And for their part, heavy hitters like Disney, Warner Bros. and Nickelodeon have been working to exploit ancillary opportunities for their largely US-hatched properties in these and other key emerging markets with some success. Certainly, kids from New York to Mumbai know who Mickey Mouse and SpongeBob SquarePants are. But on the ground, despite the myriad manufacturing and retail challenges associated with operating in these nascent markets, things are changing. The BRIC economies have been pegged to become the most dominant in the world by 2050. And with a combined GDP of US\$20 trillion and 40% of the world’s population, market forces all but demand the creation of indigenous IP that will resonate locally and elsewhere. With increased buying power and tools of production in place from years of service work, it would seem that the time is now.

A bear market in Russia “Without a doubt the biggest property in Russia right now is Masha and the Bear,” says Karen Raugust, licensing expert and author of *The Animation Handbook*. With such an endorsement, the trajectory of Masha is a good place to start.

The property’s series of the same name was developed by Moscow-based Animaccord Animation Studios and targets kids ages three to nine. Since its introduction in 2009, Masha has entered the ranks of the top three licenses in Central and Eastern Europe. The CGI series’ seven-minute eps air on national broadcaster Russia 1 and have helped the IP take hold in the territory. And under the guidance of Copenhagen, Denmark-based brand management company Ink, Masha and the Bear now has a roster of more than 50 licensees covering 100-odd categories, and designs on a much broader program.

“We were met with skepticism naturally because of the origin of the series,” explains Claus Tømming, director and partner at Ink. “Sure, it came from an odd

destination. But because of the beauty of the animation and the stories, we managed to roll it out to [some of the] best broadcasters in the world.”

At first, Tømming was concerned that the series might not be ripe for export because of its uniquely Russian characteristics. For instance, the toon flips the archetypes of Russian fairytale *The Bear and the Little Girl*. Traditionally, the Bear symbolizes wildness and unpredictability, while Masha, the girl, represents everything sweet and virtuous. In the updated series, however, the Bear is calm and thoughtful, and Masha is a source of disruption and excitement. But Tømming soon realized that the property’s Russian sensibility was only a surface attribute, and a wider-reaching (read exportable) message lay underneath.

“Fundamentally, everybody can relate to it,” he says. “It’s really about the clash between the worlds of adults and kids, and that is something universal.”

With a reliance on sight gags and broad humor rather than dialogue, *Masha and the Bear* ended up in the envious position of finding TV carriage around the globe, including France, the Nordics, Poland, Australia, South Korea and the Middle East.

The rollout of consumer products in Russia started in 2010 with key drivers such as toys, plush, DVDs, back-to-school and stationery.

“My challenge now,” admits Tømming, “is to bring the consumer products to the rest of the world.”

In its efforts to make Masha and the Bear the first Russian-born kids IP to go truly global, Ink has started lining up licensing agents to cover different territories. For example, Lisle International has just signed on to rep the IP across the UK. The plan is to lead with DVD and publishing. “From there, we will move into key categories like apparel, stationery and back-to-school.”

Additionally, Tømming notes discussions are underway regarding a global master toy deal, along with tablet makers and live-event producers interested in creating a “4D movie experience.”

Moscow-based Animaccord Animation Studio’s Masha and the Bear is one of Russia’s first homegrown IP with international appeal



Brazil's preschool-skewing *Galinha Pintadinha* found initial success online and now has more than 50 licensees in the territory

The billion-dollar question, of course, is whether or not *Masha and the Bear* can make it in the North American market. With a dedicated booth set for Licensing Show in Las Vegas, the US is certainly a priority for Ink. But the company knows that to cross the great divide, a property has to be ready—you only get one chance at retail these days.

"Simply put, we need a bigger portfolio of content for the US," he says. "We are going to face that region with the same structure as the other ones. First we need more content, and then we need a great broadcaster."

Currently, there are just 25 seven-minute episodes of *Masha and the Bear*, which isn't enough to strip or propel a major US program. Animaccord is working on producing more eps, and Tomming is confident that in time the Russian export will eventually spread far and wide. "It's based on a fairytale and it's been sort of a fairytale commercially, too," he says.

Striking gold in India Long a hub for inexpensive animation service work, India has sprouted a wholly home-grown IP that has the earmarks of a licensing hit centered on a relatable main character.

"Everybody knows more about licensing now and knows about the revenue that can be realized," says Raugust, explaining the logic Hyderabad, India-based Green Gold Animation followed as the company set out to create *Chhota Bheem*.

"[Green Gold] realized that its own IP could be culturally relevant, and that if it kept the merchandising rights, it could fully monetize a property's licensing potential," she adds.

In 2008, Green Gold Animation launched the first 13 x 11-minute episodes of *Chhota Bheem*. The 2D-animated series aimed at four to nines follows the adventures of the

nine-year-old titular character as he travels the globe with a trusty crew of eccentric friends.

"There is some comedy, but really it's about the adventure," says Govinda Talluri, VP of business development for Green Gold.

The series found a home on Indian kidnet Pogo TV, which is owned by Turner Broadcasting. It was initially produced in four languages—English, Tamil, Hindi and Teglul.

"It is one show that really helped Pogo TV become the most popular [kids] channel in India," says Talluri. Indeed, according to India's TAM Media Research, Pogo was the leading kids channel in 2012, and *Chhota Bheem* was among its highest rated programs. The company estimates that approximately 34.73 million children watch *Chhota Bheem* in India on a regular basis. Currently, the series airs anywhere between four and six hours daily on Pogo. With 148 episodes in the can, the network releases a new episode roughly once a week. And less than a year after the character hit the airwaves, Green Gold launched licensed comics, DVDs and apparel at mass retail.

"When we saw the response to the first products, we started to believe that we could expand it beyond those first categories," says Talluri.

Green Gold answered the response to the initial rollout by signing upwards of 20 different licensees to cover the entire Indian market in categories as diverse as ceiling fans (Usha Fans) and rainwear (John's Umbrellas). Promotional partnerships, most notably one with Pepsi, followed. The global soft drink giant licensed *Chhota Bheem* as a spokesperson for its Notty energy drink.

While Green Gold has deals with major Indian retailers such as Reliance Retail to carry multiple *Chhota Bheem*

SKUs throughout their stores, the disorganized nature of Indian retail (often cited as an impediment to creating coordinated mass-market programs in the country) called for an innovative solution.

"We have built our own branded stores," says Talluri. "The stand-alone stores offer the widest array of Chhota Bheem products, with DVDs and t-shirts as the leading sellers."

Currently, there are 30 such outlets around India with Green Gold and franchisees opening them up at a clip of about two per month.

To keep Chhota Bheem top-of-mind with its audience, Green Gold plans on producing a full-length feature film each year. Its second theatrical production, *Chhota Bheem and the Throne of Bali*, was released this spring.

Already a homegrown success—Green Gold estimates Chhota Bheem has generated US\$40 million in retail sales so far—the company is now concentrating on exporting the series and following up new broadcast deals with similar licensing programs.

"We have versions now for Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia and Iran," says Talluri, adding that he's in discussions to bring the charismatic nine-year-old to the US market.

"We are getting a good response," he says. "The characters look Indian, but the stories we tell are not specific to Indian culture, they are universal."

Finding viral success in Brazil What started as a failed attempt by creators Julianio Prado and Marcos Luporin to land a slot on Brazilian children's TV now has the potential to become one of the country's biggest cultural exports. In 2006, after the concept for *Galinha Pintadinha* was rejected by Brazilian TV execs, its creators uploaded some of the early animations to YouTube. Since then, the short-form animated preschool series, featuring sing-alongs and an array of colorful barnyard characters, is now nearing its one-billionth view. It's also spawned a licensing and merchandising program that has the world's eyes looking towards South America.

"The blue chicken is loved all over Brazil," says Miguel Moreira, a designer for IP owner Bromelia Produções. "It's turned into a powerful brand with licensees and live shows, too."

After realizing success on YouTube, its creators took the short-form animation to the DVD market and created three separate volumes that each sold more than 1.5 million copies. Bromelia then tapped local licensing agent Redibra to help fashion a licensing program.

"*Galinha Pintadinha* has an enchantment factor that we can't really explain," says Moreira. "It's a mixture between the songs and the color and rhythm of the animation. Truly, it's been successful as a licensing project in all areas," he says.

Currently, *Galinha Pintadinha* has a roster of more than 50 licensees across multiple categories. Brazilian manufacturer Multibrink produces plush, which drives the CP program. And a number of local companies like Copag, Brincadeira de Criança, Dican, Elka, Tectoy, Grow, Lider, Toyster and Yellow have divided up the games, puppets and

electronic toys categories. On the live-event side, *Galinha Pintadinha* stage adaptations have been mounted in Brazil's most populous cities, Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro.

Retail carriage is also very well established in Brazil, with SKUs lining the shelves of Walmart, Carrefour, Casino Group (Pão de Açúcar, Extra), Lojas Americanas, Fnac, Saraiva and their online shops. Online retailer Submarino also carries a number of SKUs and Brazilian toy retailers RI Happy and PB Kids stock an ever-growing assortment of goods featuring the little blue chicken.

Beyond BRIC El Chavo ready for its US closeup

Forty-year-old Mexican IP *El Chavo* is arguably one of the most popular and recognizable characters for North America's Hispanic population. Originating as a beloved live-action series, an animated series produced by Anima Estudios in 2006 has since spawned 130 half hours seen daily throughout Mexico and, more recently, the US.

In 2011, Miami, Florida-based broadcaster Univision inked an agreement with IP owner Grupo Televisa to act as the exclusive consumer products agent for all Televisa brands, including the iconic *El Chavo*.

With the original series still garnering an estimated audience of more than 100 million viewers every day throughout Latin America, it's easy to see why Televisa and Univision saw dollar signs when they agreed to work together to build a CP program for the US.

To get things started, Univision began airing the new animated series, *El Chavo Animado*, in January, with the aim of bringing the much-loved IP to a younger generation. It centers on *El Chavo*, a loveable hunting-cap-clad boy who resides inside a barrel and, along with a number of recurring characters, takes part in meddlesome adventures that usually involve broad physical comedy and a number of well-worn catchphrases that are now ingrained in Mexican culture.

While *El Chavo*'s consumer products business in Latin America, guided by Televisa, has generated close to a billion dollars in retail sales to date, the rest of the world has yet to be conquered. However, ahead of Licensing Show this year, Univision inked a new US master toy deal with Malibu, California-based toyco Jakks Pacific.

"We're very bullish," says Rick Alessandri, EVP of enterprise development at Univision Communications. "What Televisa has done is show us that we can bring the property to Latin American markets in an organized and calculated way." With the US Hispanic market estimated to have US\$1.5 trillion in purchasing power by 2015, it's easy to understand Alessandri's enthusiasm.

Starting this fall, Jakks will introduce multiple SKUs to mass retail that will cover action

figures, plush, dolls, role-play, dress up, seasonal toys, novelty and table-top games.

"We saw an opportunity to introduce a Spanish-language entertainment property to the toy aisle that truly resonates," says Timothy Thompson, VP of new business development for Jakks Pacific.

Driving the line are a 12-inch plush that comes with an *El Chavo* DVD and a Talking Chavo doll that spouts a number of the character's catchphrases.

Alessandri says Univision will watch to see how the Jakks line performs before picking up new licensees in the US. However, he fully expects that *El Chavo* will have a full mass-market US program in play by 2014, with apparel and accessories, toys and games, publishing, back-to-school items, stationery and home décor leading the way. —Gary Rusak





Hyderabad, India's Green Gold Animation and its franchisees have opened more than 30 stand-alone stores dedicated exclusively to Chhota Bheem merch

As for moving the popular IP to other Latin American locales, the series was translated from Portuguese into Spanish. "The popularity of the Spanish version on YouTube is similar to the Brazilian version," says Moreira, noting that Spanish DVDs and mobile versions will debut this year.

An English version, tentatively titled *Lottie Dottie Chicken*, is also in the works, and the company will look to follow a similar route.

"We first will let the animation find an audience online," he says. "Then if it goes viral, we will launch products into that market."

The creators believe that the internet has levelled the playing field for IPs, and although their original idea was rejected by the gatekeepers of traditional media, they believe the blue chicken will have the last laugh. "It seems children don't really care where the videos come from or where they originally aired," says Moreira. "If the children of the world want it, Galinha Pintadinha will be the first Brazilian global IP."

Hong Kong expansion With more than a decade germinating in Hong Kong, design-led girls brand Fatina Dreams is now looking to capitalize on its awareness in that influential Asian market. Designed by Prudence Mac, and owned by her company Chocolate Rain, Fatina Dreams centers around a doll named Fatina that "dreams herself alive." The resulting designs, not surprisingly, have a dreamlike quality and also zero in on an ecological theme. Fatina's world, Mushroom Land, is full of friends including Chefo, Sky Bird and Latte.

Initially, Chocolate Dreams created and produced Fatina Dreams products, including accessories and bags, but the IP has since garnered momentum through successful corporate partnerships in Hong Kong with the likes of Starbucks, HSBC and Giorgio Armani, as

well as local publishing deals and an apparel license with Hong Kong's Fashion Lab.

"Now we want to take her out to China and Southeast Asia," says Mara Gardner, director of brand development and marketing at Chocolate Rain. "We are going to take advantage of how popular it is in the rest of Asia to build our case for China."

An added bonus for the property is that it's adaptable to each territory it enters, according to Gardner. "In China, the IP can be for teens and older," she says. "In Europe, we are thinking it will work for tweens and even younger girls."

With a high priority being placed on breaking into the mainland Chinese market, Chocolate Dreams is looking to start production on animated shorts made exclusively for the territory while simultaneously investigating publishing options in Asia's most populous nation.

"The Chinese government is interested in this area and they are looking at supporting something that grew out of Asia," Gardner says. "I think they looked at what Gangnam Style has done for South Korea and found that to be very interesting."

Europe is also in Chocolate Rain sights. By aging the IP down a bit, Gardner is working on inking fashion and accessory deals for carriage at major retailers to introduce the IP as primarily a design-led girls brand.

"We are trying to make the brand as universal as possible," she says. "We have found that it has a very wide appeal."

With the two-pronged approach, Gardner says that the company's designs on the North American market lay a bit further in the future. "We feel that the US is a big market and highly competitive," she says. "We want to have our success stories in Asia and Europe first before we attempt to enter it." 



Busting out

Judging by our round-up of properties and programs debuting in Las Vegas, this year's Licensing Show won't come up short on excitement away from the casinos

BY DAWN WILENSKY

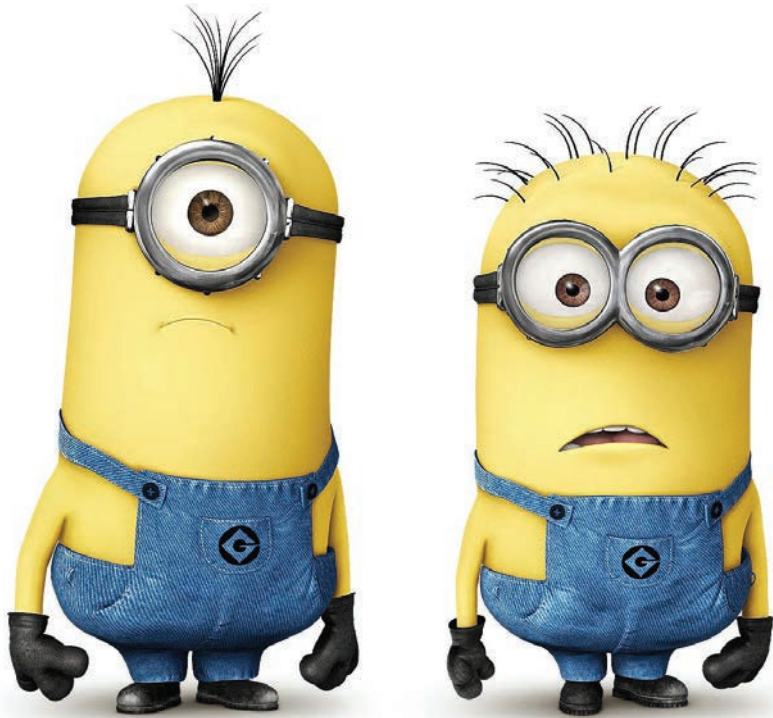
Mysticons is Topps for Nelvana

Still in the early stages of development, *Mysticons* is a new project for Canada's Nelvana Enterprises and The Topps Company. The 26 x 22-minute original boys action series centers around four regular kids in the quiet suburb of Castletown who lead double lives as a legendary line of heroes known as Mysticons. After discovering a powerful tome, the four friends transform into oath-bonded warriors who leave their regular life of homework, sports and video games behind to battle fire-breathing dragons, evil knights and barbaric orcs, led by a trio of evil warlords set on destroying all of mankind. Nelvana is currently aiming to build a broad multi-category consumer products range for launch in 2015 that includes a strong trading card element woven into the fabric of the brand, courtesy of Topps. Additionally, a master toy program will drive the brand on-shelf, supported by secondary toys including role-play items. Expect a strong digital experience to also accompany the launch of the brand. "We're excited about partnering with [Michael Eisner's] Tornante and Topps. *Mysticons* is a brand that is absolutely in sync with its audience of six- to 11-year-old kids, and we'll ensure that the brand will be meaningfully engaging with a broad array of on-screen and on-shelf experiences," says Andrew Kerr, head of consumer products for The Americas and Australasia at Nelvana Enterprises.

Nelvana and trading card co. Topps are betting on *Mysticons'* boy appeal



LICENSING
SHOW



Whaaaa? Yep, the ever-popular Minions are getting their own feature film next year.

Minions, Jurassic Park 4 to invade retail

The consumer products program for *Jurassic Park 4* will be anything but prehistoric. In fact, the technological advancements made since the debut of the property's first movie two decades ago will enable Universal Partnerships & Licensing to create "innovative product, particularly in the toy and digital categories, that can truly bring the dinosaurs of the iconic series to life outside of the theater," says Universal EVP Amy Taylor. As global toy partner for the upcoming 3D movie, Hasbro will come to mass-market retail with figures, plush, dolls, playsets, vehicles, role play, games, Kre-O building sets and novelty items six weeks prior to its release, which is TBD right now. At Licensing Show, Universal will be on the lookout for apparel licensees to join Jurassic's roster. A major program is also in the works for *Minions*, the animated spin-off of *Despicable Me* that's due in theaters worldwide in December 2014. The consumer products program will celebrate the industrious, off-kilter yellow creatures now known to have evolved from a single-cell organism that live for a collective purpose—to seek out and serve the most despicable master they can find. Thinkway Toys and Hybrid Apparel will continue as global partners in their respective categories, while seasonal partners are being sought for Christmas, spring and summer (outdoor, sporting goods) products for the multi-tier retail program.



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Henson talks up new series

Fraggle Rock alumni the Doozers are going solo in a new preschool CGI animated series from L.A.-based The Jim Henson Company. *Doozers'* TV footprint, however, will follow a different path with an initial launch in Europe, where it will air across territories on Turner-owned preschool net Cartoonito this fall. Why a change in strategy? "Cartoonito embraced it early on and wanted to help us launch it," explains Henson's Melissa Segal, EVP of global consumer products. Toys and publishing in all channels will be the cornerstone of the consumer products program. Apps and eBook strategies are also in the works. Toddlers, meanwhile, will get their first glimpse of new property Jim Henson's Chatter Zoo via an appisode being developed by London-based kids mobile learning company Mindshapes this month. The appisode features stories, learn-and-play activities, animation and music content. Licensee Sassy Toys is already showing the app (which features a zookeeper and baby animals to nurture and care for) to retailers, and plans on launching infant development toys for the specialty market in fall 2014. Mass-market distribution will follow down the road.

Saban Brands readies duo of animated shows

Nickelodeon plays host to two new animated gems from L.A.'s Saban Brands. *Digimon Fusion*, the sixth installment of the franchise, stars Mikey, a human boy who is transported into the digital realm and must team up with his new Digimon or "Digital Monster" friends before their world is deleted once and for all. Expect the announcement of a global master toy licensee at the show, while first products will hit mass-market shelves in 2014. And racking up its first TV exposure is *Julius Jr.*, an animated preschool series inspired by Paul Frank's iconic monkey. Mattel's Fisher-Price is on-board as master toy licensee, and the first products for the brand are due at US mass-market retailers in 2014.

Outfit7 suits up consumer products program

They've been tickled, poked and played with on iOS and Android touchscreen devices, and now they're the talk of a new expanded licensing push. Products featuring Tom on the Road (formerly known as Talking Friends) are headed to boutique and specialty retailers for a soft launch in holiday 2014, followed by a global tentpole DVD release in October 2015. Publishing, apparel and toys will also head to retail shelves for holiday 2015. The property features 14 characters including Talking Tom Cat, Talking Angela and Talking Ginger. Each of the apps features a unique and fully animated 3D character that can engage in friendly two-way conversations about their inner emotions, or repeat things users say to them, and customized videos of interactions with the characters can be shared via Facebook, YouTube or email. "Talking Friends has firmly established itself in the mobile world—in June, there will be one billion downloads across the globe," says Samo Login, founder and CEO of the Limasol, Cyprus-based company.



New Teen Titans series is a go!

After a seven-year hiatus, Robin, Starfire, Raven, Beast Boy and Cyborg are once again fighting crime and teenage angst in the new Warner Bros. Animation series *Teen Titans Go!* The licensing program for the Cartoon Network US newbie, which first aired in late April, is led by master toy partner Jazwares, which has PVC figures, plush and role play items heading to all US retail channels for holiday 2013. Property owner Warner Bros. Consumer Products is on the hunt for apparel, accessories and back-to-school licensees to join the program targeting boys and girls ages six to 11. WBCP is also developing a style guide that will allow for growth in additional product categories, while appealing to junior and younger fans. "*Teen Titans Go!* already has a legion of followers, and we are looking forward to working with our licensing partners to leverage the broad appeal of this comedic property and capture even more new fans," says WBCP EVP Karen McTier.

With a new series on Cartoon Network, Warner Bros. is building a program around *Teen Titans'* comedic sensibility

Activision ups its game with new play pattern

Partners who can infuse some "magic" into product assortments are on the radar for Activision Publishing as it builds the portfolio for Skylanders SWAP Force, due this fall. The next iteration of the billion-dollar gaming franchise will let its core audience of six- to 12-year-olds to create more than 250 unique character combinations with a mix-and-match play pattern. "Since innovation is such a core part of our DNA, we're looking for licensees to infuse some of that magic into their own products," says Ashley Maily, VP and head of global licensing & partnerships for the Santa Monica-based company. USAopoly is also planning to launch a Skylanders Monopoly game in 3Q/4Q to join existing licensees including BD&A (gaming accessories), Penguin Group (publishing) and Mega Bloks (construction sets).

LICENSING
SHOW



With the series off to a very strong start on PBS Kids, the first batch of Daniel Tiger products is rolling out in July

Consumer products land in Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood

Just 10 months after *Daniel Tiger’s Neighborhood* debuted on PBS Kids in the US, the preschool property will take up exclusive residence over at Toys ‘R’ Us in July with a program led by master toy licensee Jakks Pacific. Plush, playsets and collectible figures will be on shelves through year-end, followed by a wide retail rollout in January 2014. Also supporting the property are University Games with puzzles and games, and Ty’s Toy Box with personalized t-shirts (a kiosk is already installed at the Toys ‘R’ Us Times Square store). Publishing is also a major initiative, with Simon Spotlight creating picture, story, novelty, activity and coloring books, as well as non-interactive eBooks. The series is the first original for property owner The Fred Rogers Company, and it was co-produced with New York-based Out of the Blue Enterprises and Angela Santomero and Toronto Canada’s 9 Story Entertainment. Packed with new content, the animated show is inspired by the iconic *Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood* and features four-year-old Daniel Tiger and his friends (sons and daughters of the original characters). A strong pro-social curriculum is melded with music to teach preschoolers core learning and emotional skills. Co-producer and co-creator Out of the Blue Enterprises is also the IP’s licensing agent and will exhibit in the PBS Kids booth at Licensing Show. Right now, apparel and accessories, soft goods, party goods and packaged goods licensees are at the top of Out of the Blue’s list.

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The US buzz around The Hive and Eric Carle

As its North American agent, The Joester Loria Group is looking to keep the US program for UK-based preschool series *The Hive* buzzing. A small selection of toys from an as-yet-unnamed US master toy licensee, based on the show currently airing on Disney Junior, will head to specialty and department stores for holiday 2013, with an expanded assortment due in 2014. And as global licensing agent for The World of Eric Carle, JLG recently appointed local agents in Korea, Russia and Benelux to further extend the program's reach. The property, driven by classic picture book *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, will reach 300 more retail doors in the UK when a full apparel collection (from licensee Smith & Brooks) heads to Mothercare stores in 2014. In the US, an expanded selection of infant development toys is on tap this fall for Babies 'R' Us, and a new endcap program just got underway at Target. A special campaign for the 45th anniversary of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* will be announced at Licensing Show, supported by promotional partnerships and retail events throughout 2014.

Trio of projects helps Evolution move forward

Brand manager Evolution is resetting the licensing program for *Legends of Oz: Dorothy's Return*, the 3D-animated feature originally slated for release in 2012. "We are showing the new film to our retail partners and are anxious to fill categories, and many of our licensees from the old film are staying with us," reports Travis Rutherford, president of licensing and retail at the L.A.-based company. Among them is master toy licensee Bandai, with plans to create dolls, plush, figures and feature plush for mass market, as well as specialty stores including Hot Topic, Barnes & Noble and FAO Schwarz. Other categories up for grabs are packaged goods, console and handheld video games, virtual worlds, social and casual games, and iPhone/iPad apps, which should launch alongside its planned February 2014 release. As the exclusive consumer products agency for L.A.-based RGH Entertainment's entire brand portfolio, Evolution is also working on *Monster in My Pocket*, a brand of collectible monsters for six- to 10-year-old boys. A TV show and app are due in fall 2014, followed by a retail exclusive in spring 2015 and a broader rollout that fall. A master toy partner is soon to be announced. On the feature film side comes *The Life and Adventures of Santa Claus*, a new 3D CGI-animated film slated for holiday 2014. A "slightly narrower" and "perhaps retail exclusive" product assortment of apparel, toys and seasonal items is planned for fall 2014, says Rutherford.

The Jungle Book gets contemporary spin

The Jungle Book is getting the full digital treatment with a new website (www.junglebookus.com), an online shop, its first-ever mobile app (launching this month), and a comprehensive digital marketing and social media plan. Leading the strategy for the contemporized animated version of the classic children's book is global brand owner SMC Entertainment Group, based in Chatsworth, California. This spring marked a limited US product launch led by toys, apparel and publishing.

Bedding, candy, back-to-school and sporting goods will follow this fall in all channels. Its core audience of boys three to six, who watch the show on Disney XD, will enjoy the launch of season two this summer and a Christmas special slated for December. The third season has already been greenlit and a theatrical film is in development for early 2015. Inkology (stationery and activity products), KellyToy USA (amusement plush), Newcastle Fabric (fleece blankets), Newco International (children's furniture) and LA Rugs (children's play rugs) are currently all on-board for the US program.



Matt Hatter gets US dimension

Getting five- to 10-year-old boys in the US immersed in the world of *Matt Hatter Chronicles* next year is the goal for Platinum Films, based in Buckinghamshire, England. Already successful in Europe, the show features a unique technique called Multivision that gives kids a 3D experience without the need for 3D glasses. Every episode includes a Multivision Sequence where Matt "goes Multivision" and puts on special glasses, enabling him to see the hidden dimension and solve a problem or escape a threat. Before taking on the US market, though, a consumer products program will launch in the UK in Q1 2014, headlined by global partners Topps (trading cards and sticker albums), Titan (print and digital comics) and Penguin Group (digital novels). The company will shortly announce its master toy partner. International rollout will follow in fall 2014 across Spain, Portugal, Southern Europe, Middle East, South Africa and Latin America. 

Matt Hatter is after US deals, but UK licensor Platinum Films first plans on rolling out the initial batch of products in the IP's homeland

**LICENSING
SHOW**

Two-year-olds and iPhones are like magnets. The rise of user-generated content is one of the huge stories of the 21st century. Let's just say that there was a lot of polyester. We don't have trampolines on the store floor. We'd like to, but that is probably a little too much interaction for us. **Carter Bryant or Anita Bryant—it's all the same to kids.**

- iStoryTime's **Graham Farrar** speaks to the power of mobile devices when it comes to eBooks
- **Lucien Harrington**, from Turner Asia Pacific, discussing the importance of fan-engagement to brand growth
- Wicked Cool Toys' **Jeremy Padawer** describes the worst job he ever had—a mediator in the Knox County, Tennessee court house
- **Amanda Montague-Sweetland**, operations manager at UK-based John Lewis, placing limits on the retailer's efforts to become more experiential
- Noted US toy biz analyst **Sean McGowan** explains why the track record of the creator of new fashion doll Pinkie Cooper won't factor into its sales



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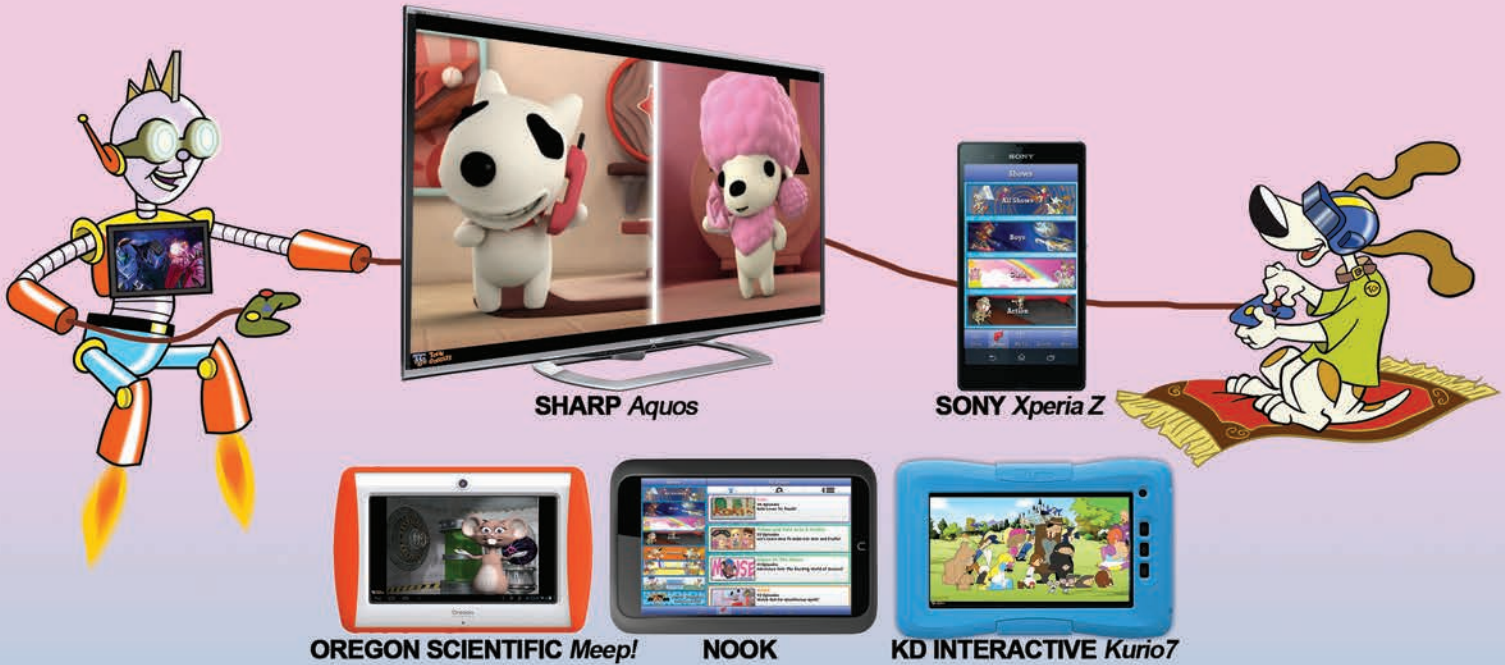
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